よく寝ます。
夢をよく見ます。
それも前と面白い夢を。
まったく漫画には
活かせませんが‥‥。

勝木 光

Baby Steps

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ

勝木 光

19

FCM4580
KC
Baby Steps 19
勝木 光
講談社

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
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19

Baby Step ベイビーステップ

人物紹介

丸尾栄一郎（エーちゃん）

STC所属。「次の全日本ジュニアで優勝、そしてプロへ」が命題。そこで優勝できなければプロを諦めるという条件付きで、テニス最優先の生活を送っている。同じ夢を持つナツは心の支え。ナツとの交際がテニスに好影響!?

鷹崎奈津（ナツ）

STC所属。全国トップレベルの選手でプロ志望。理論派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。ただいま恋もテニスも絶好調!!

青井コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ元プロ選手という経歴に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート

佐々木瑞子

エーちゃんの試合に必ず駆けつけてくれる心強い応援団。瑞子はエーちゃんへの思いを実らす。

影山小次郎

瑞子は失恋。影山は親友。

パワー全開!!
関東ジュニア、ベスト4進出!!

ラブラブ全開♪

Baby Steps

CONTENTS

#172: UNTHINKABLE

#173: RECKLESSNESS AND UNPREDICTABILITY

#174: POWER OF DETERMINATION

#175: ALL-OUT BATTLE

#176: HIGH POINT

#177: UNKNOWN FACTOR

#178: VISION

#179: FULL ATTACK FULL DEFENSE

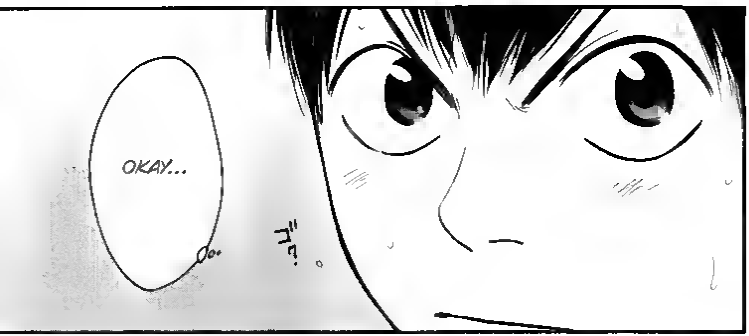
#180: BREAK 2

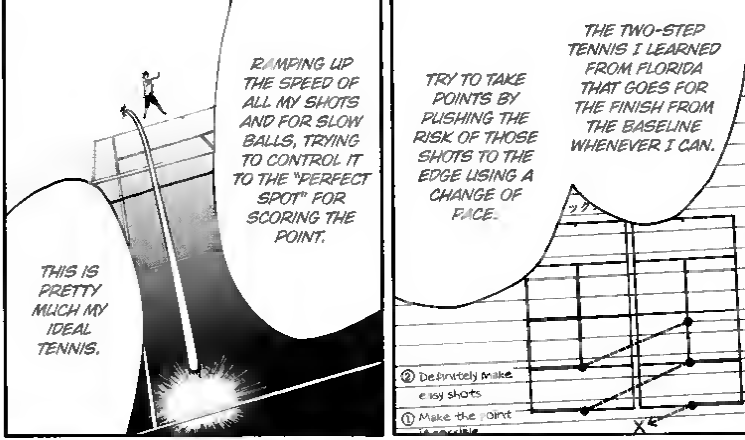
#181: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

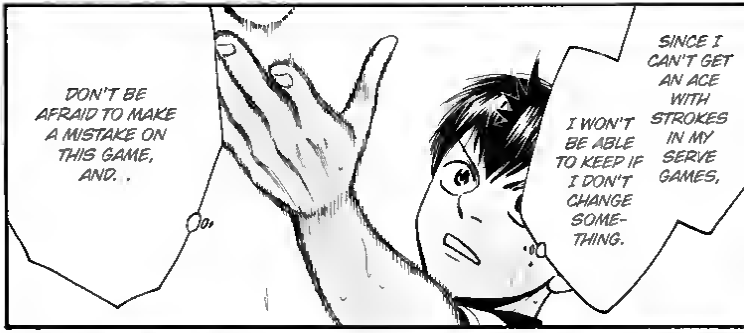
to Giant Strides

#172: UNTHINKABLE

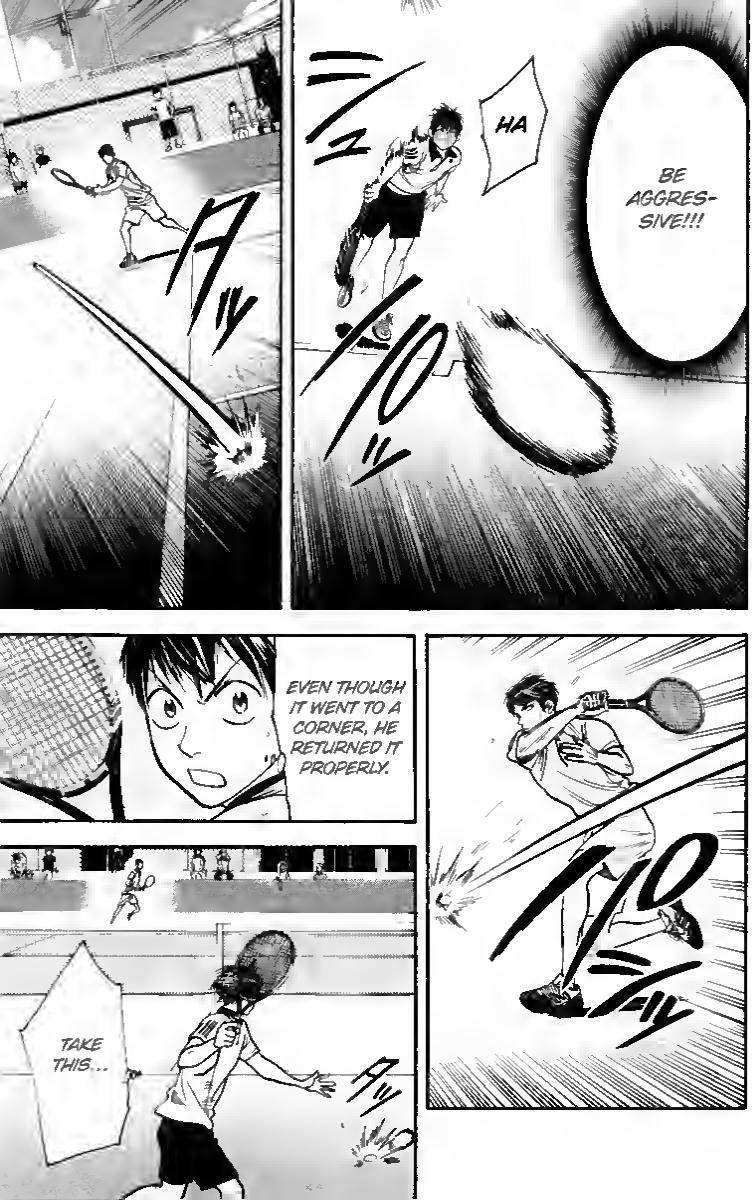
YOU NEED TO MAKE GOOD USE OF YOUR STYLE AND YOUR EXPERIENCES SO FAR.
SO IT WILL WORK TOWARD YOUR BENEFIT.
IT'LL BE POINTLESS FOR YOUR "GAMBLE" TO BE SIMPLY RECKLESS, RIGHT?
ドキ
ドキ




RAMPING UP THE SPEED OF ALL MY SHOTS AND FOR SLOW BALLS, TRYING TO CONTROL IT TO THE "PERFECT SPOT" FOR SCORING THE POINT.
THIS IS PRETTY MUCH MY IDEAL TENNIS.
TRY TO TAKE POINTS BY PUSHING THE RISK OF THOSE SHOTS TO THE EDGE USING A CHANGE OF PACE.
THE TWO-STEP TENNIS I LEARNED FROM FLORIDA THAT GOES FOR THE FINISH FROM THE BASELINE WHENEVER I CAN.
② Definitely make easy shots
① Make the point
X


DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE A MISTAKE ON THIS GAME, AND. .
I WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP IF I DON'T CHANGE SOME-THING.
SINCE I CAN'T GET AN ACE WITH STROKES IN MY SERVE GAMES,

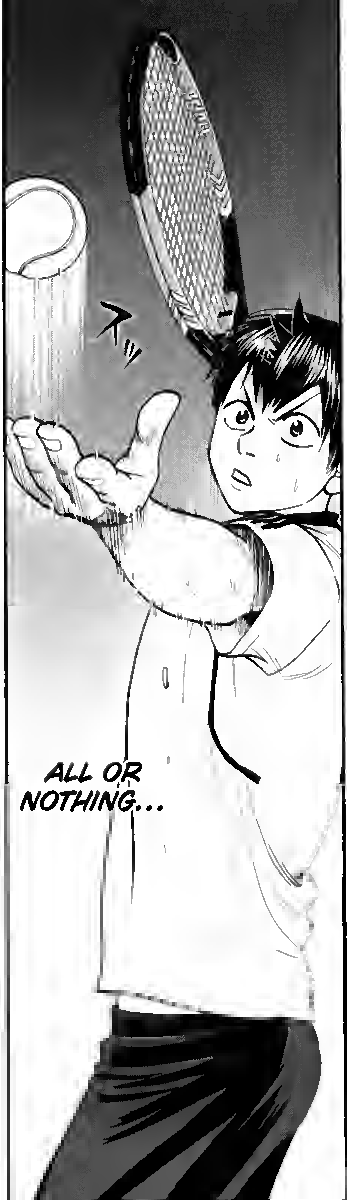
IN ORDER TO TAKE THIS SET...


HA
BE AGGRES-SIVE!!!
EVEN THOUGH IT WENT TO A CORNER, HE RETURNED IT PROPERLY.
TAKE THIS...

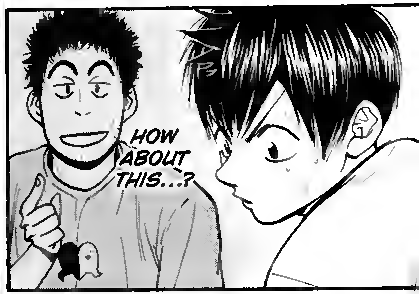
WAY DOWN THE LINE...
TOP-SPIN!!!

ドッ
!?
0 - 15
HE STARTED GOING FOR AN ACE ON TOP SPINS TOO?!

IT'S THE SAME AS BEFORE .. BUT HIS TECHNIQUES ARE ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL
HE WENT FOR THE TIGHT SPOT WITHOUT HESITATION.
HE MUST HAVE WENT FOR IT BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT TO LOSE THIS SET.
NO.. EVEN FOR NABAE-KUN, THAT WILL BE TOO MUCH OF A RISK.
THAT MEANS .. HE'S GOING TO GO FOR AN ACE ON ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE SLICE?
IF THAT'S THE CASE .. I WON'T BE ABLE TO WIN EVEN IF I RAISE THE STAKES THE SAME WAY AS HIM.
HE'S TAKING OUT HIS STRONGEST CARDS WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE RISKS.
IT MIGHT BE MY FIRST TIME SEEING NABAE-KUN TAKING SUCH A GAMBLE.


ALL OR NOTHING...

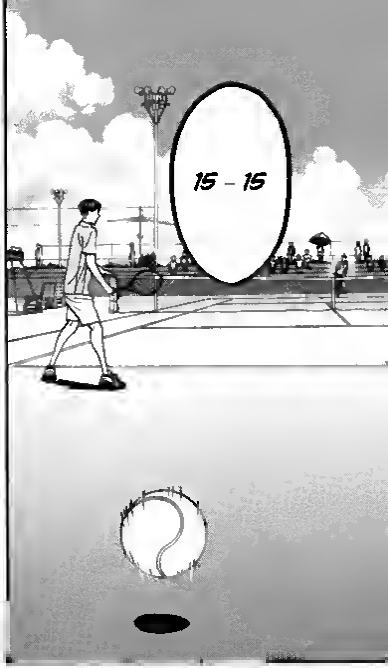
THEN...


HOW ABOUT THIS...?

I AM THE CHAL-LENGER...

HA
QUICK SERVE!

HUH... WHAT WAS THAT?
THE BALL WAS SLOW, BUT THE TIMING WAS FAST.
WHAT'S THAT TRICK SHOT?


15 - 15

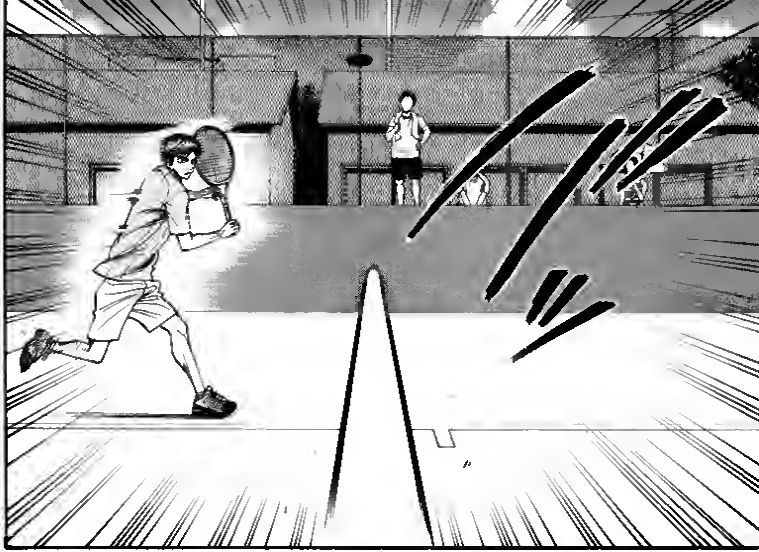
I EVEN SCORED!
Y-YES! IT WENT IN!

HMMM.. HE TRIED OUT A SERVE HE JUST LEARNED YESTERDAY..
THAT'S THE SPIRIT.

IT'S BE-
CAUSE I DID
SOMETHING I
USUALLY WON'T
DO!!!
IS BECAUSE
NABAE-KUN
WASN'T EX-
PECTING MY
QUICK SERVE
BASED ON
HIS DATA.
THE REASON
IT SCORED
EVEN THOUGH
IT WASN'T A
GOOD SERVE
BUT THAT
WON'T
WORK ON
ME ANY-
MORE.
UNPRE-
DICTABLE
MOVES
LIKE THIS
ARE ONE OF
MARUO-KUN'S
STRENGTH.
LOWER THE AC-
CURACY OF MY
FIRST SERVE
FROM THE USUAL
70% TO 50%
INSTEAD,
MAXIMIZE
SPEED!
NEXT.. I'LL
TAKE FULL AD-
VANTAGE OF
THE SLOW
SERVE JUST
NOW.

THIS IS MY...
ULTIMATE FLAT SERVE!!!!

ドン



わっ
A-AMAAAAAZ-ING!!!
15 - 30.

YOU'RE KIDDING ME...
#17
HE SLAMMED DOWN A SUPER HIGH SPEED SERVE!!!
WOAH WOAH . HE'S ON A TOTALLY DIFFERENT LEVEL.
#17

DID HE READ MY SERVE? ...NO, BUT EVEN STILL...
THIS IS JUST LIKE AGAINST IKE-KUN...
IS HE THIS STRONG?
...YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.
IT'S JUST THAT I DIDN'T KNOW BECAUSE NABAE-KUN CHANGES HIS STYLE BASED ON HIS OPPONENT...
THE ABSOLUTE FORCE THAT KEEPS REIGNING ON TOP OF JAPAN'S TOP CLASS PLAYERS.
THIS IS THE POWER OF JAPAN'S NO.1.

I WANT TO BEAT HIM BECAUSE HE IS SUCH A PERSON...
NO...
I NEED TO BEAT... SUCH A PERSON...

THAT'S WHY... I'LL DO EVERYTHING I POSSIBLY CAN!!!

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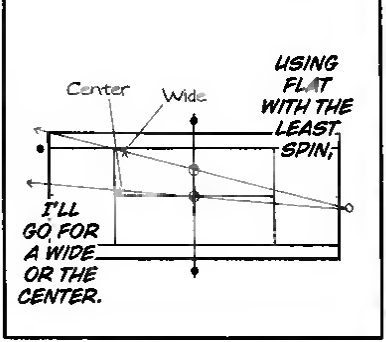
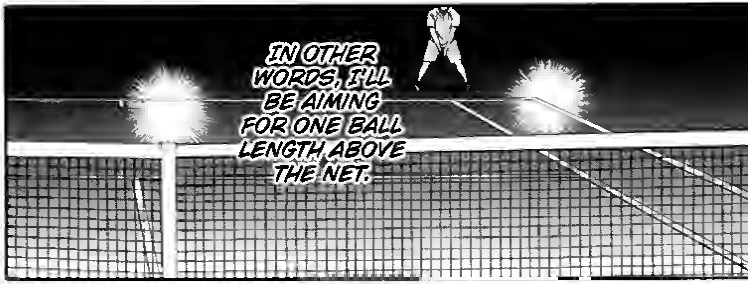
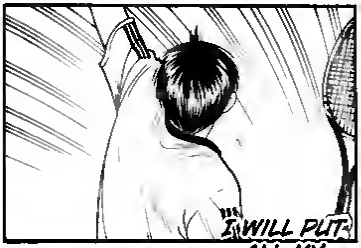
Cleaner: Stark & EOS
Typesetter: CraN
Checker: LordLestat

THREE MORE POINTS TO GO FOR TAKING THE FIRST SET.
NABAE YUU
MARUO EIICHIROU
4
5
WHAT CAN I DO RIGHT NOW,
AGAINST JAPAN'S NO.1 PLAYER ATTACKING WITH FULL FORCE...?
IF IT'S JUST THESE THREE POINTS...
ALTHOUGH IT'LL BE PRETTY TOUGH...
I STILL HAVE A CHANCE!!!
I NEED TO GO BEYOND NABAE-KUN'S EXPECTATIONS...
JUST LIKE THAT !! QUICK SERVE,
TO DO THAT...
#173: RECKLESSNESS AND UNPREDICTABILITY


Center
Wide
USING FLAT WITH THE LEAST SPIN,
I'LL GO FOR A WIDE OR THE CENTER.

I NEED TO AIM FOR THE CORNERS WITH MAXIMUM SPEED WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT ACCURACY.
FOR EXAMPLE...


IN OTHER WORDS, I'LL BE AIMING FOR ONE BALL LENGTH ABOVE THE NET.



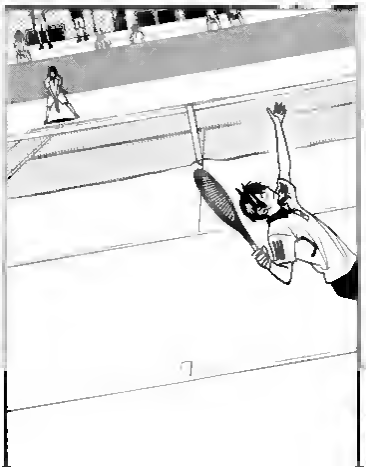
I WILL PUT ALL MY WEIGHT,

ONTO THE BALL!!!
HE'S TRYING TO FORCE AN ACE.
RGH

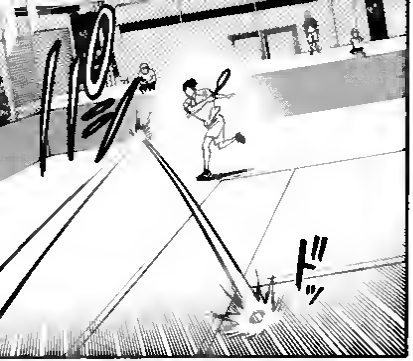
30 - 30
HUH?! WHAT WAS THAT!!!
IT WAS SO FAST!!!
IT'S GOOD THAT IT WENT IN... BUT THAT WAS HIS SECOND SERVE!!!
I WANT TO MAKE THE NEXT ONE FOR SURE...
THAT IS EXACTLY WHY...
BUT...
THIS IS SOME-THING I USUALLY NEVER DO...

THAT WAS WAY TOO RECKLESS.
ふるふる
I-IT WENT IN...!

...BUT I DEFINITELY CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS OVER AND OVER...
I THINK I WAS ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PRES-SURE ON THE SECOND SERVE...



NEXT...


ドッ

HA

THE SPEED DROPPED, BUT THAT WAS A GOOD SPOT.

HA
アー

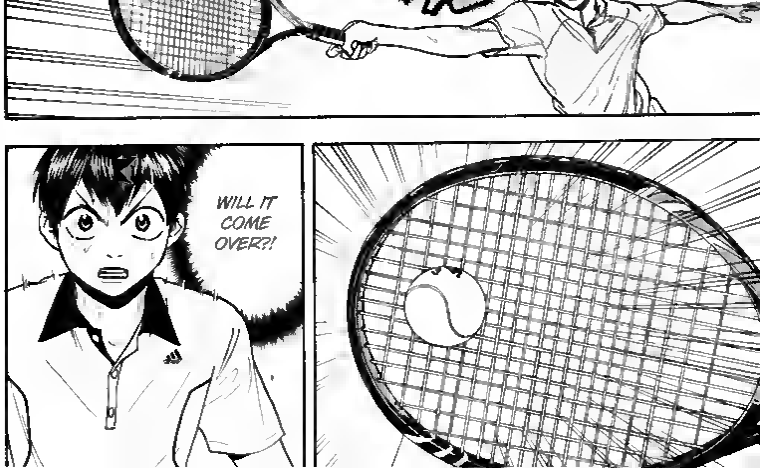
DON'T BE AFRAID, AND...

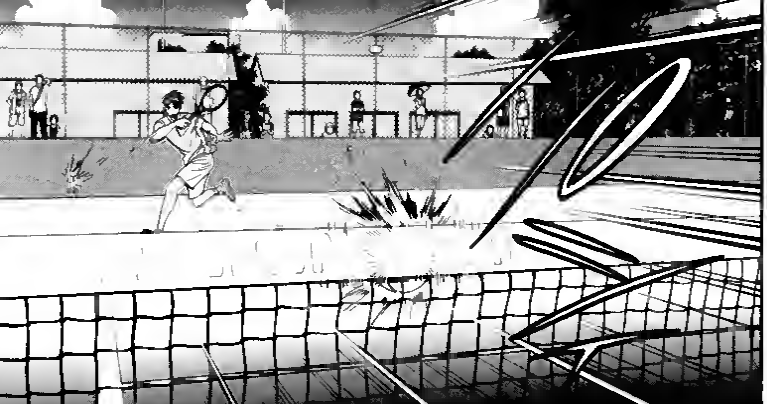
WHILE I STILL HAVE THE UPPER HAND THANKS TO THE SERVE...
DAH
SOMETHING I DON'T USUALLY DO: A POWER BATTLE!!!

RATHER THAN DIVING UP THE COURT,
WITHOUT CHANGING THE PACE MUCH, SLIGHTLY QUICKEN THE TEMPO FOR A SPEED BATTLE...
AIM FOR THE OPEN COURT...
SLAM IT IN!!!

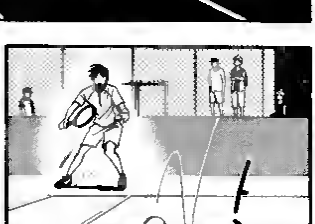
ドン

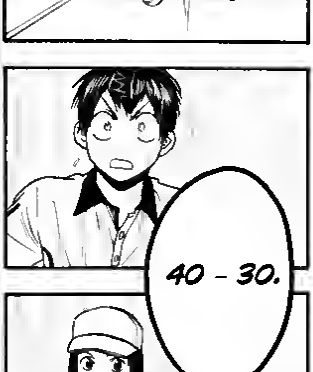
ビュン

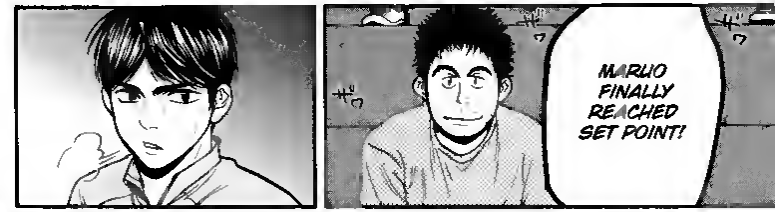

WILL IT COME OVER?!



YES!




40 - 30.



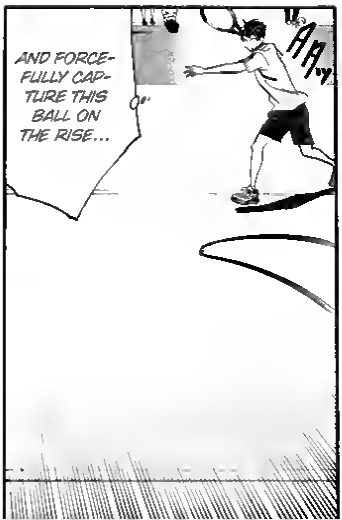
	丸尾栄一郎
精神力 of Mind	A
判断力 Judgement	B
戦略性 Ability	D?
フラットスピン	B
[illegible]	B
[illegible]	B
[illegible]	B
[illegible]	B

BUT THIS IS A STRATEGY THAT ABAN-DONS HIS USUAL STYLE...

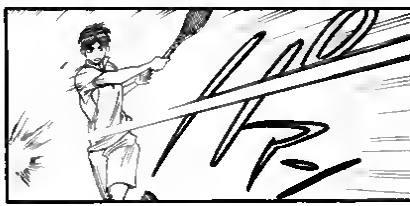
FIRST SERVE IS A MUST!!!
SPEED, CONTROL, ACCURACY. WATCH OUT ALL THREE!!!
THAT'S WHY I WON'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP
IT'S EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO BREAK NABAE-KUN RIGHT NOW...
I'LL FINISH IT HERE!!!
HA
RETURN THIS...

CREATE A STEEP ANGLE AND DEEP DOWN..

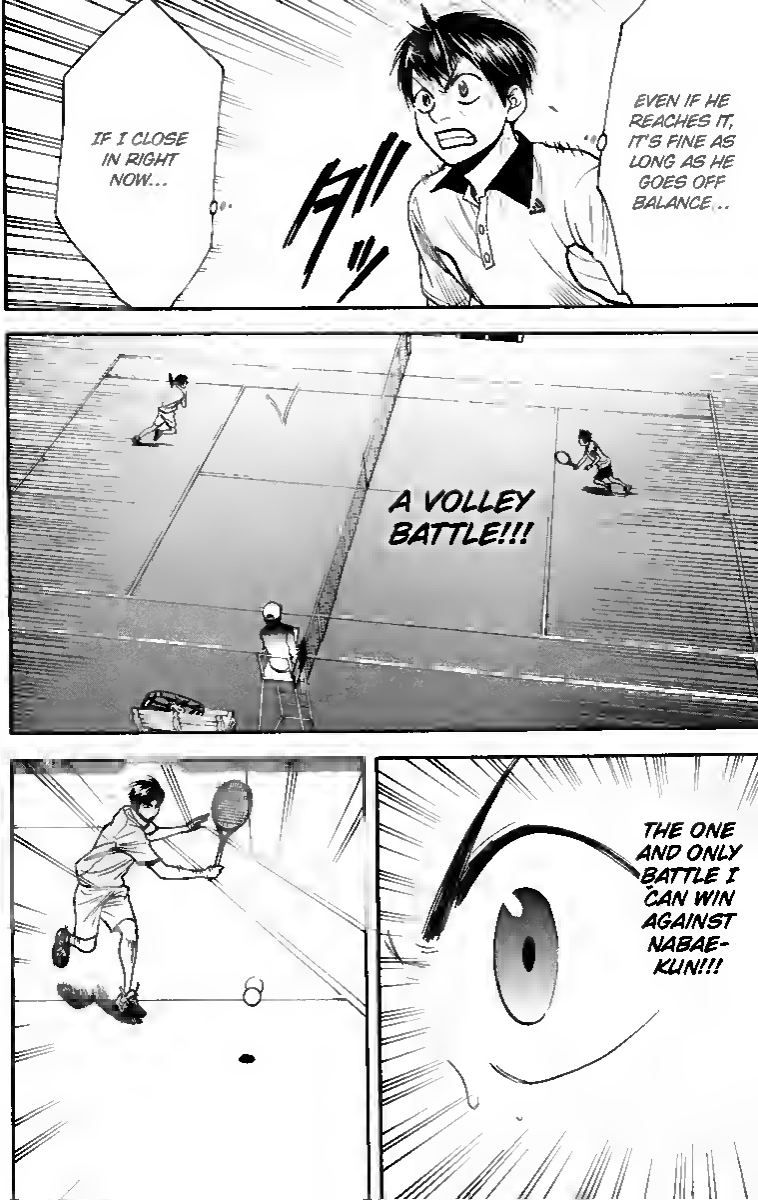
WITH A TOP SPIN THAT CURVES OUT..


AND FORCE-FULLY CAP-TURE THIS BALL ON THE RISE...

HE SWITCHED BACK TO CHANGE OF PACE?



DROP SHOT!
IT WON'T BE THAT EASY.
HE'S GOING FOR THE BALL ON ITS RISE.... WILL HE MOVE TO THE NET?
IT'S A BIT TOO HIGH. .
HUH?!
!?
タッ
SO HE'S GOING FOR THAT


IF I CLOSE IN RIGHT NOW...
EVEN IF HE REACHES IT, IT'S FINE AS LONG AS HE GOES OFF BALANCE...
A VOLLEY BATTLE!!!
THE ONE AND ONLY BATTLE I CAN WIN AGAINST NABAE-KUN!!!

A CROSS!!!
LOB
STRAIGHT?!

タッ
OUT.
FIRST SET WON BY MARUO. COUNT: 6 - 4.

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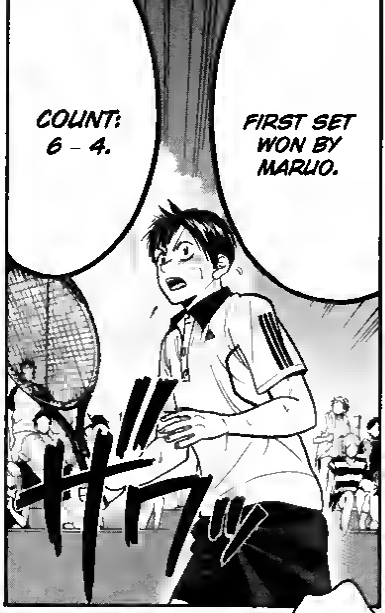
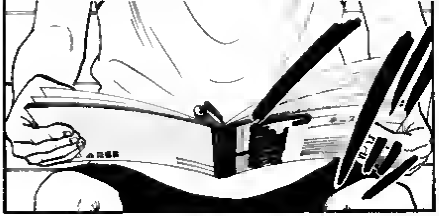
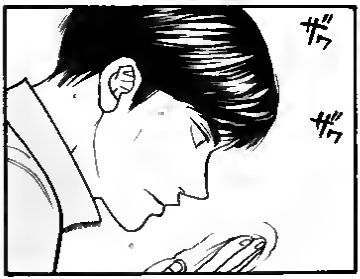


#174: POWER OF DETERMINATION

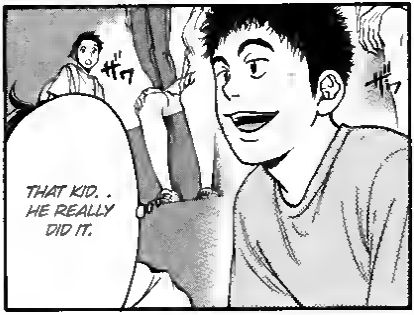


4
6

..HE TOTALLY READ MY NEXT MOVE AT THE SET POINT, SO I DON'T HAVE TIME TO CELEBRATE.
カキカキカキ


ガク
ガク

ガク
IT'S JUST THAT MY SURPRISE ATTACKS SUCCEEDED. I CAN'T CONTINUE USING THIS STRATEGY.

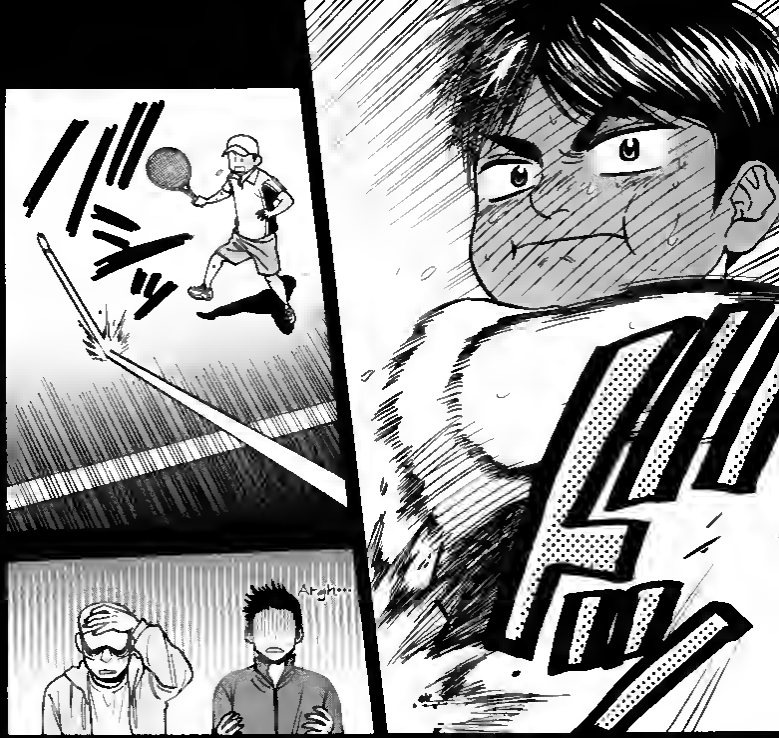

ガク
ガク
ガク
THAT KID.. HE REALLY DID IT.

ガク
IT'S MY FIRST TIME SEEING NABAE LOSE A SET
ME, TOO... THIS IS GETTING EXCITING.
ガク
ガク

HMM, IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN HE MUST BE THE REAL DEAL.
NAH... THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF HIS HARD WORK.
AH, MIYAMOTO-SAN.
YOU MUST BE A SPLENDID INSTRUCTOR, AOI-KUN.
FOR A PLAYER WITH LESS THAN THREE YEARS OF TENNIS EXPERIENCE TO STEAL A SET FROM NABAE-KUN...
BUT SINCE NABAE-KUN IS UNBELIEVABLY COMPOSED FOR A JUNIOR PLAYER, WE WANTED TO PRESSURE HIM AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.
NO, NO YOU CAN'T TELL ANYTHING YET.
DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S A CHANCE FOR MARUO-KUN NOW?
I NEVER IMAGINED THAT NABAE-KUN WOULD UNDERGO SUCH GROWTH.
THESE DAYS, I FEEL LIKE THERE AREN'T MANY PLAYERS WHO CAN CONTROL THEIR EMOTIONS TO THAT EXTENT EVEN IN THE PROFESSIONAL STAGE..
YOU ARE RIGHT. THE REASON NABAE-KUN BECAME STRONG WAS BECAUSE HE IS ABLE TO STAY CALM UNDER ANY SITUATION.

NABAE YUU. AGE 10.
GOOD MORN-ING, SIR
OH, YOU ARE RIGHT ON SCHEDULE TODAY, TOO.
GOOD MORNING.
MORNING, YUU-KUN.
SUCH A HARD WORKER EVEN THOUGH HE'S SO YOUNG
SINCE HE PASSES BY AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY. THERE'S NO NEED FOR A CLOCK

NOT ONLY IS HE NEVER LATE OR ABSENT, HE ALWAYS COMPLETES THE GOALS HE SET.
HE HAS UNBELIEVABLE WILLPOWER FOR A TEN YEAR OLD
IT'S DIFFICULT EVEN FOR ADULTS TO PERFECTLY FOLLOW TOUGH PRACTICE PLANS THEY MADE BY THEMSELVES.
YUU'S LEVEL OF SELF-CONTROL IS ALMOST FRIGHTENING.
EVEN THOUGH MOST KIDS CAN'T HELP GETTING INFLUENCED BY THEIR EMOTIONS
カキ
カキ
**th
Tokyo's Spring
Elementary School Tennis Competition
Main office →
HE ACTS LIKE THAT DURING MATCHES...
MAYBE THAT IS EXACTLY WHY


Argh...

I CAN SOMEHOW UNDERSTAND BECAUSE OF HOW HARD HE USUALLY WORKS, BUT...
HERE WE GO AGAIN. HE GOES OUT OF CONTROL WHEN THINGS DON'T GO AS HE LIKE...

abae Yuu
4
0
YUU... LET'S GO.
HEY... YOU KNOW, IT'S DIFFICULT EVEN FOR US ADULTS TO PERFECTLY CONTROL OUR EMOTIONS AT ALL TIMES
THERE'S NO WAY EVERY-THING WILL GO THE WAY YOU LIKE.

IF IT'S JUST DURING THE MATCH, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE MATCH WITH YOUR WILL-POWER.
IF YOU CAN MAKE THAT YOUR WEAPON YOU WILL BECOME STRONGER THAN ANYONE ELSE
...BUT YOUR DETERMINATION IS STRONGER THAN ANYONE ELSE I'VE SEEN SO FAR
A PLAYER WHO CAN ALWAYS BE CALM EVEN WHEN HE IS TROUBLED, ANGRY, OR TIRED,
AND CAN DETERMINE THE BEST STRATEGY IN THAT SITUATION AND EXECUTE IT EXACTLY THE WAY HE WANTS.
I'M SURE YOU CAN ONE DAY BECOME THAT PLAYER WITH AN INVINCIBLE HEART.

NABAE YUU, AGE 18.
HEY, THAT'S NABAE RIGHT?
HE'S SUPER STRONG DESPITE THE LOOKS.
THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL A FLAWLESS, PERFECT TENNIS.
IT'S EXTREMELY CONSISTENT.
BUT HE'S OUT OF LUCK TODAY...

HE'S STRONG!
EVEN THOUGH HE STARTED A COUPLE YEARS AFTER ME
PLAYER
1
2
3
IKE SOUJI
6
1
NABAE YUU
1
0
DUNLOP
HE IS TOTAL-LY BEYOND NORMALCY!!!

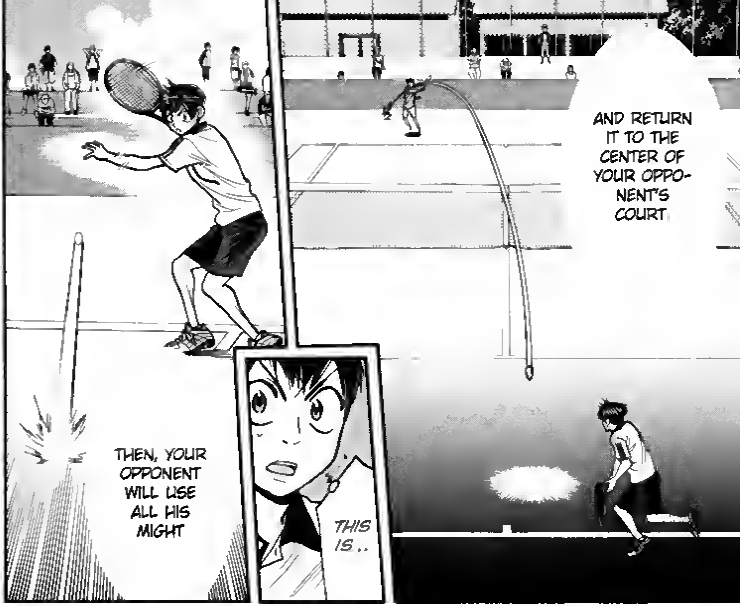
YES
GAME SET WON BY IKE. COUNT: 6 - 1 6 - 0.

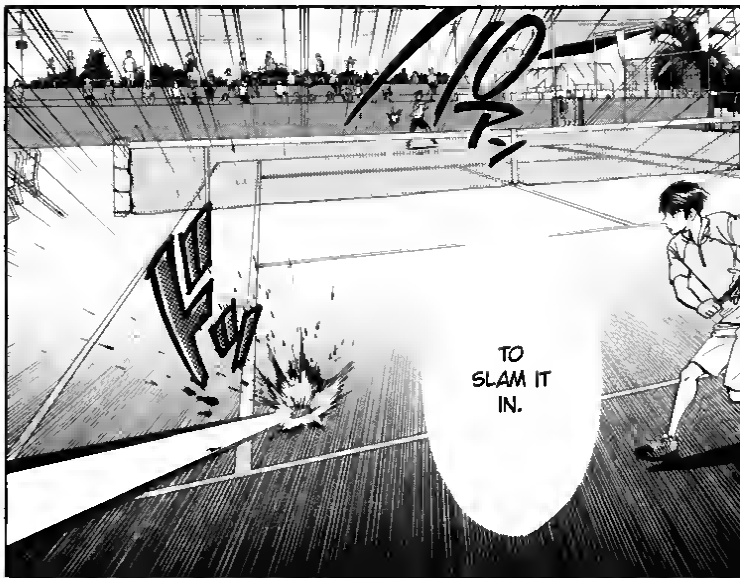
SO HE SHOCKED YOU ENOUGH TO BREAK YOUR FAVORITE RACKET.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR HUMANS TO COMPLETELY SUPPRESS THEIR EMOTIONS.
NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU ARE, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU CAN'T SUPPRESS THEM AT ALL.
LET'S ACCEPT THAT AND TRY TO FIGURE OUT A SOLUTION.
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO MINIMIZE YOUR EMOTIONS FROM INFLUENCING THE GAME.

カキ
カキ
カキ
カキカキ
prince
HE TOTALLY GOT ME WITH THOSE LAST THREE POINTS.
WHEN I HAD MARUO-KUN MAKE AN UNUSUAL CHOICE OF STRATEGY LIKE THE RECKLESS SECOND SERVE OR A POWER BATTLE,
ALTHOUGH I LOST THE POINTS, THE FLOW OF THE GAME WAS STILL MINE.
FOR THE LAST DROP SHOT, SINCE MY BALANCE WAS OFF,
I SHOULD HAVE PLAYED SAFE AND HIT IT TO HIS FEET SO I CAN GAIN THE UPPER HAND
AND GO FOR THE FINISH ON THE NEXT SHOT.
BUT WHEN HE TOOK THE SET POINT,
MARUO-KUN TURNED THE GAME INTO HIS SPECIALTY, VOLLEY BATTLE

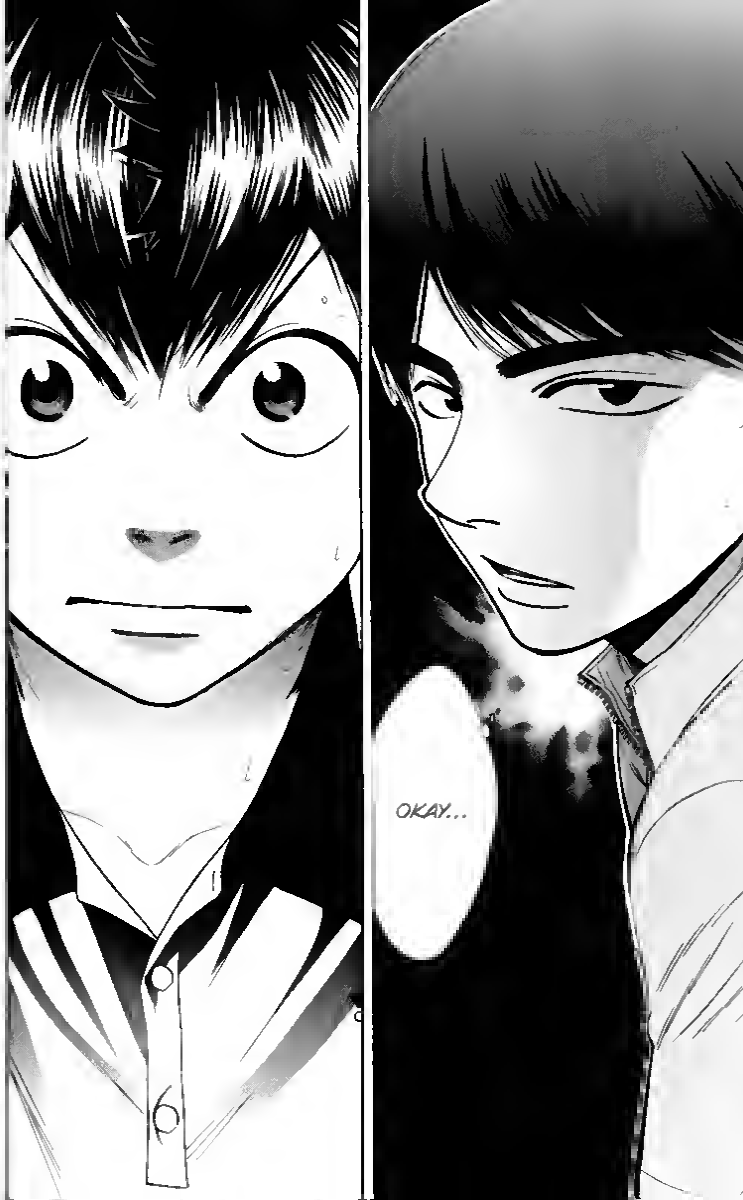
I GOT EMOTIONAL AND TRIED TO FORCE IT IN.
BUT... THE MOMENT LAST YEAR'S LOSS IN A VOLLEY BATTLE PASSED THROUGH MY HEAD,
TIME!
IN THE FIRST PLACE, DON'T TRY TO ERASE THE EMOTIONS YOU CAN'T HANDLE WITH YOUR OWN STRENGTH

MAKE A STRONG IMAGE JUST FOR ONE POINT.
YOU DON'T GET EMOTIONALLY SWAYED WHEN YOU ARE ALONE.
SINCE THOSE EMOTIONS COME FROM YOUR OPPONENT, YOU SHOULD TRY TO USE YOUR OPPONENT TO ERASE IT.
TAKE THAT STRONG EMOTION CREATED BY YOUR OPPONENT,
SQUEEZE IT ALL ON THE BALL,


AND RETURN IT TO THE CENTER OF YOUR OPPONENT'S COURT.
THEN, YOUR OPPONENT WILL USE ALL HIS MIGHT
THIS IS..


TO SLAM IT IN.

THIS... IT'S THE SAME AS LAST YEAR.
NABAE-KUN STARTED SHOWING HIS TRUE STRENGTH FROM HERE.
0 - 15.
IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR POINT.
THAT BALL WITH ALL YOUR EMOTIONS WILL DISAPPEAR OUT OF THE COURT.
SINCE I KNOW THAT ALREADY, I WON'T LET HIM DO AS HE PLEASES.
THIS IS PROBABLY SOME SORT OF A SWITCH.


OKAY...

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#175: ALL-OUT BATTLE

15 – 15
WOW... WHAT A SHARP SLICE SERVE...
HE WON'T LET ME TAKE THE UPPER HAND.
HIS STROKES ARE SO DEEP AND STRONG ...

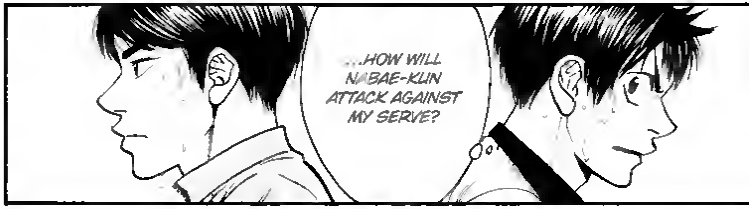
RGH
AND HE TARGETS THE BORDERS OF MY DEFENSE FOR AN EASY FINISH.

NABAE-KUN'S STRONG-POINT...
THIS IS NABAE-KUN'S TENNIS THAT CHANGES ITS STYLE BASED ON THE OPPO-NENT.
IT'S THE FRUIT OF COMPLETELY UN-DERSTANDING MY TENNIS BASED ON THE DATA IN THE FIRST SET...
AGAINST A STRENGTH OF 10, HE USES AN 11. AGAINST AN 11, HE ATTACKS WITH A 12. THE MOST OPTIMAL TENNIS.
PERFECT TENNIS WITH HIGH DECI-SIVENESS AND STABILITY.
A TENNIS THAT IS POSSI-BLE,
ONLY AFTER A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE OP-PONENT.

GAME, NABAE. 1 - 0. SECOND SET.

ドッ

prince

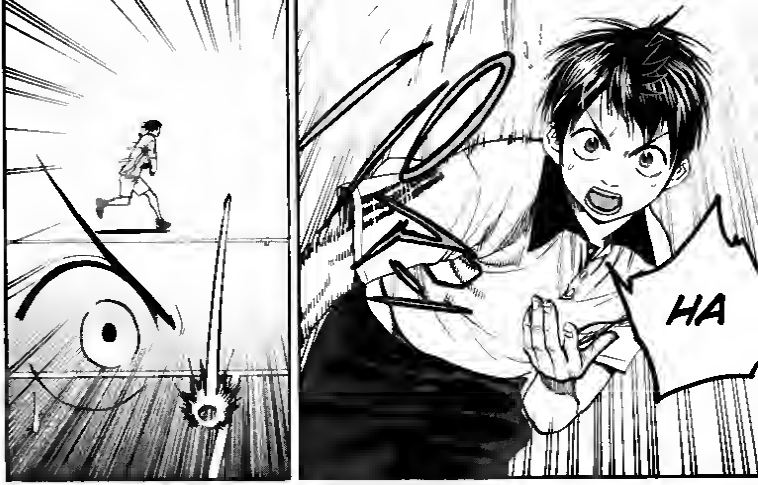

...HOW WILL NAE-KLIN ATTACK AGAINST MY SERVE?

I SOMEHOW PULLED THROUGH IN THE FIRST SET, BUT I CAN'T KEEP ON FIGHTING LIKE THAT

THEN IT'S MOST LIKELY FOR HIM TO RAISE THE STAKES EARLY ON IN THE SET
SINCE HE LOST THE FIRST SET AND CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE, HE SHOULD WANT TO AVOID ANY-THING CLOSE AND RISKY.

SO THIS IS THE KEY BATTLE

UTILIZE CHANGE OF PACE WITH A 1:1:81 OR MORE CONTROL THAT I TRIED LAST YEAR BUT FAILED.
MAKE FULL USE OF ALL THE DATA I GAINED SO FAR AND TAKE HIM HEAD ON!
SINCE I TOOK THE FIRST SET, THIS IS ALSO THE BEST MOMENT FOR ME TO RAISE THE STAKES, TOO.


HA

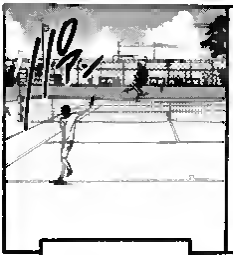
0 - 15
I KNEW IT...!
SINCE HIS PACE KEEPS ON CHANGING, I NEED TO NARROW DOWN MY TARGET IN A RALLY BATTLE.
SINCE HE'S TARGETING MY FLATS AND TOP SPINS, I CAN'T AFFORD TO HIT ANYTHING WEAKLY
...BUT HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE MANY DIFFERENT VARIATIONS SO FAR...
...BUT I CAN'T JUST RELY ON THE SLICES SINCE THEY AREN'T VERY DECISIVE...

YES.
BUT IF I PUSH MYSELF THIS FAR, I CAN AT LEAST SCORE SOME POINTS.
HA
THAT'S WHY HE HAS TO PUSH HIMSELF.
PLAYING THIS FAR MAKES ME SEE IT.

SINCE YOU ARE JUST LIKE ME,

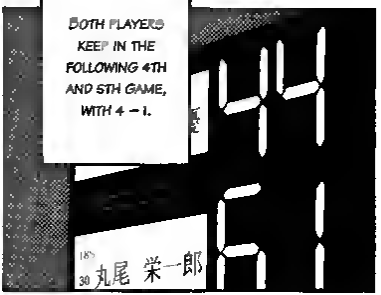
YOU MUST SEE IT, TOO,
THAT I NEED TO GO FULL POWER IN THIS GAME.

GAME, NABAE. 2 - 0. SECOND SET.



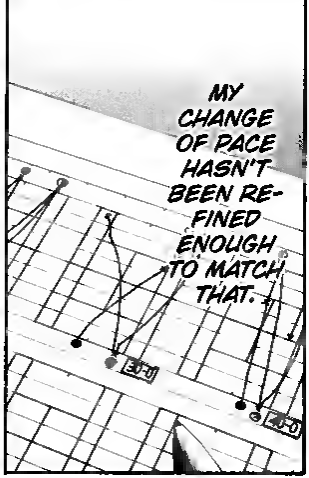
After taking a one break lead, Nabae keeps the next one with 6 – 0.

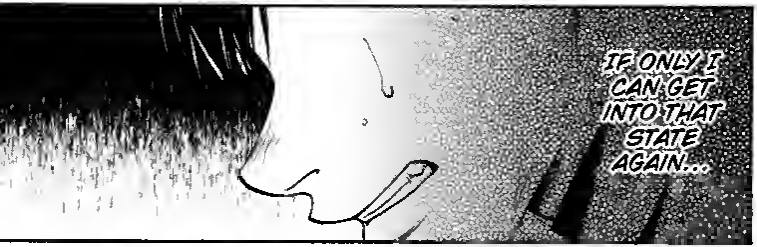
Both players keep in the following 4th and 5th game, with 4 – 1.



SINCE HE CAN TAKE THE SET WITHOUT TROUBLE IF HE CONTINUES TO KEEP HIS SERVE GAMES, IT WAS UNNECESSARY TO RAISE THE STAKES LIKE BEFORE.
W/S BECAUSE IT WASN'T THE NABAE-KUN FROM BEFORE.
THE RE SON I MANAGED TO KEEP
I DON'T HAVE A VISION OF BEATING THAT RIGHT NOW.
SO THAT ONE GAME WAS NABAE-KUN'S FULL POWER.

NO, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE IF I'M EXTREMELY CLOSE TO THE ZONE LIKE THAT FIRST SET.
EVEN STILL, I CAN'T TELL IF I WILL BE ABLE TO BREAK...


MY CHANGE OF PACE HASN'T BEEN REFINED ENOUGH TO MATCH THAT.
30-0
40-0


IF ONLY I CAN GET INTO THAT STATE AGAIN...

AOI-SAN DEFINITELY SAID THERE ARE PLAYERS WHO CAN CREATE THAT STATE...
BY WILL...

THERE ARE PLAYERS WHO CAN GET IN THE ZONE BY WILL...

...I ALREADY HAVE A SET, SO WE ARE AT A SCORE THAT IS EASY TO "CONCENTRATE JUST ON THE PRESENT".
NABAE YUU
44
MARUO EIICHIRO
61
チラ
IN ORDER TO GET AS CLOSE TO THE ZONE AS POSSIBLE FROM HERE...
ぎゅっ
IT IS A TIME WHERE I CAN STILL AFFORD TO TAKE A GAMBLE.
AREN'T THERE ANY GOOD DATA...?

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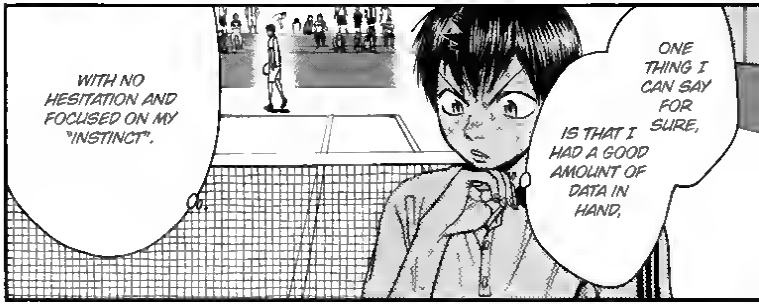
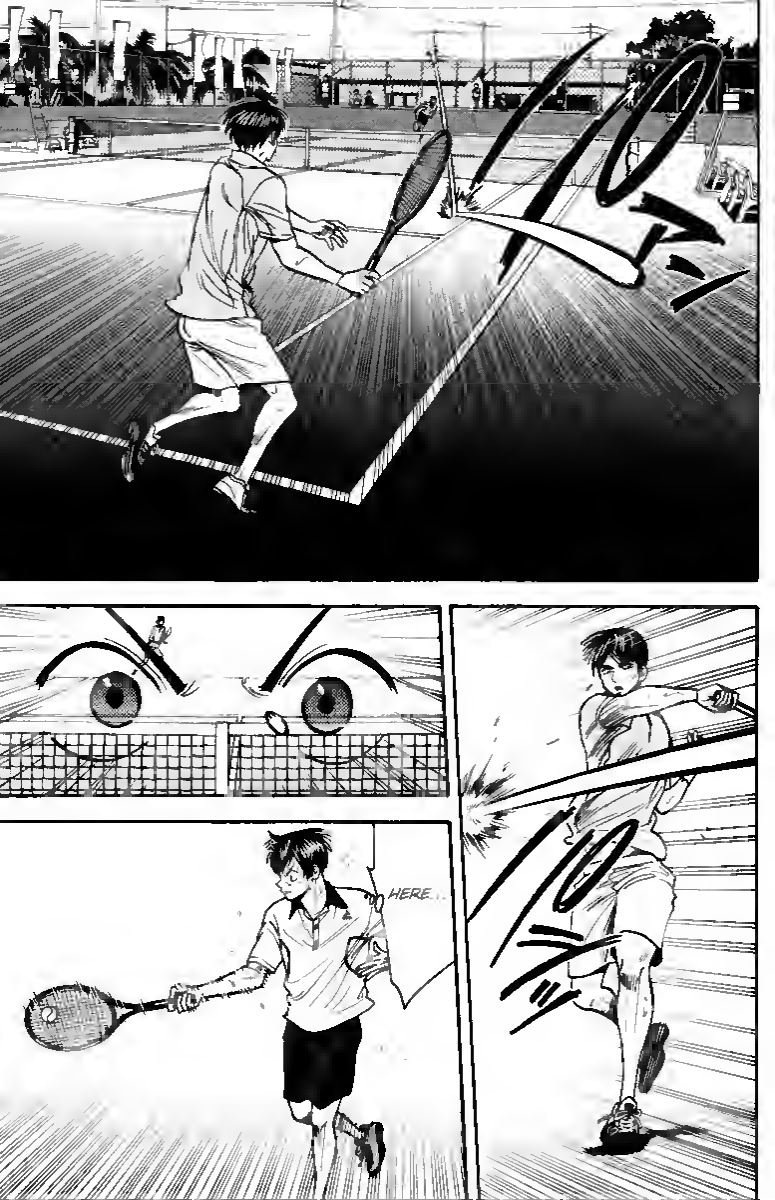
AND THE START OF THIS MATCH.
AT THE VERY END OF THE MATCH AGAINST IDE-KUN.
WHEN I WAS COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED IN THE MATCH AGAINST ARAYA-KUN.
NEAR THE END OF THE MATCH AGAINST ALEX.

#176: HIGH POINT

TIME
HEY, HE STARTED LOOKING AT HIS NOTES.
HOW MANY DOES HE HAVE?


ONE THING I CAN SAY FOR SURE,
IS THAT I HAD A GOOD AMOUNT OF DATA IN HAND,
WITH NO HESITATION AND FOCUSED ON MY "INSTINCT".

I HAVE NABAE-KUN'S DATA IN MY NOTES, AND IT'S ALL IN MY HEAD
I HAVE FAITH THAT MY INSTINCT WILL CHOOSE THE BEST CHOICE, AND...


HERE...

NO... I WAS THINKING RIGHT NOW.
HA

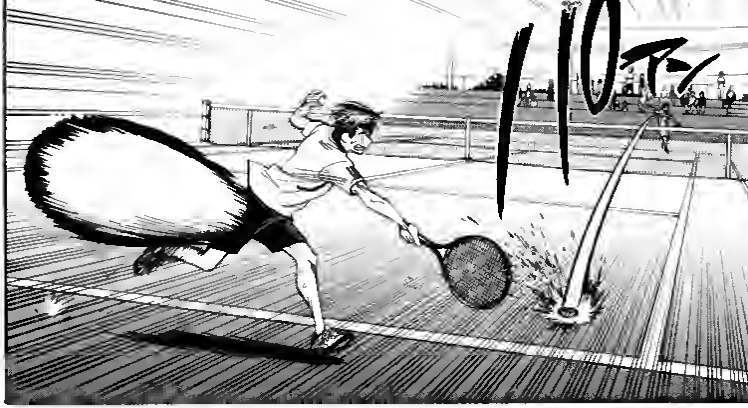
15 - 0.
OKAY.. I MADE A POINT, SO IT'S NOT BAD.
BUT I'M JUST PLAYING WITHOUT HESITATION. IT'S NOT THE SAME AS ZONE.
バーン
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT TIME ..
WHEN MY LEGS WERE MOVING BY THEMSELVES

FEELING ALL THE STRENGTH IN MY BODY BURSTING OUT.
THE SENSATION THAT TOOK AWAY EVEN THE SENSE OF TIME.

IT'S DIFFERENT FROM THAT.

GAME, MARUO. 4 - 2. SECOND SET.

BUT I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO KEEP.
BECAUSE NABAE-KUN ISN'T GOING FOR THE BREAK.
THE PROBLEM IS AFTER THIS... I WILL LOSE THE SET IF I CAN'T BREAK SOMEWHERE.
I WANT TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT BACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.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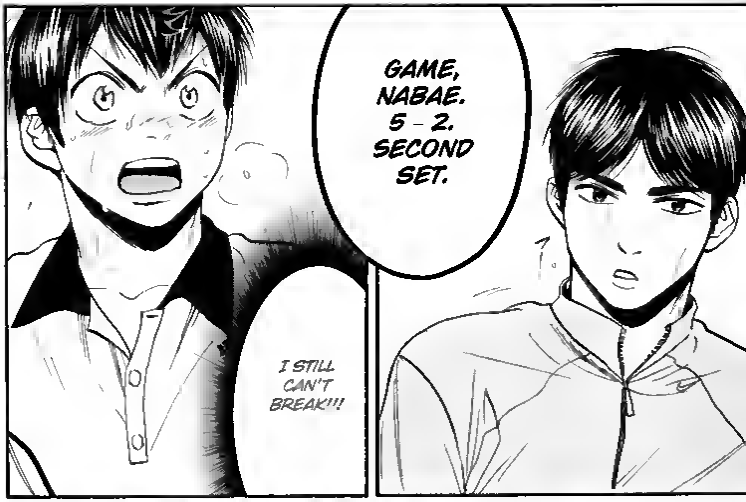
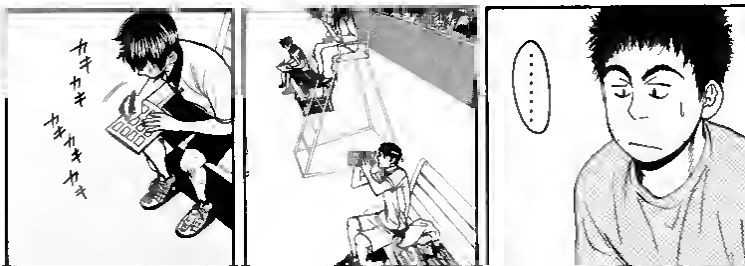

GAME, NABAE. 5 - 2. SECOND SET.
I STILL CAN'T BREAK!!!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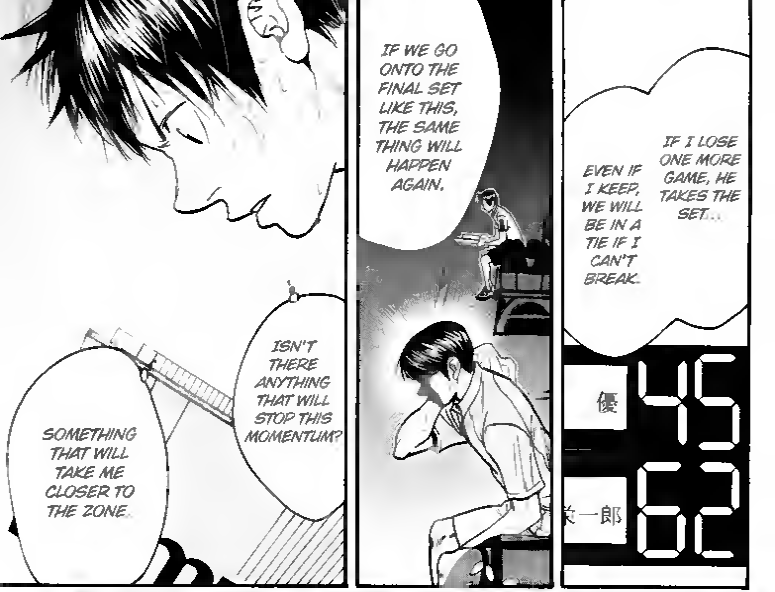
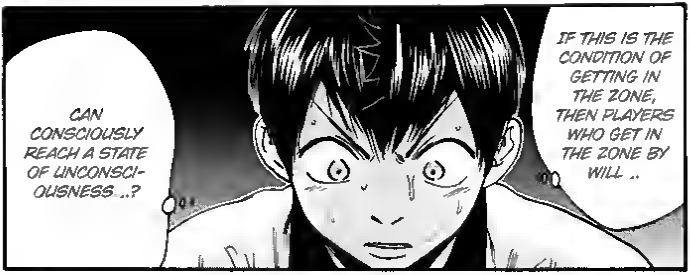

SOMETHING THAT WILL TAKE ME CLOSER TO THE ZONE.
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING THAT WILL STOP THIS MOMENTUM?
IF WE GO ONTO THE FINAL SET LIKE THIS, THE SAME THING WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.
EVEN IF I KEEP, WE WILL BE IN A TIE IF I CAN'T BREAK.
IF I LOSE ONE MORE GAME, HE TAKES THE SET...
優
一郎
45
62

THERE'S ONE MORE THING... THAT HAPPENED WHEN I WAS IN THE ZONE...

AH

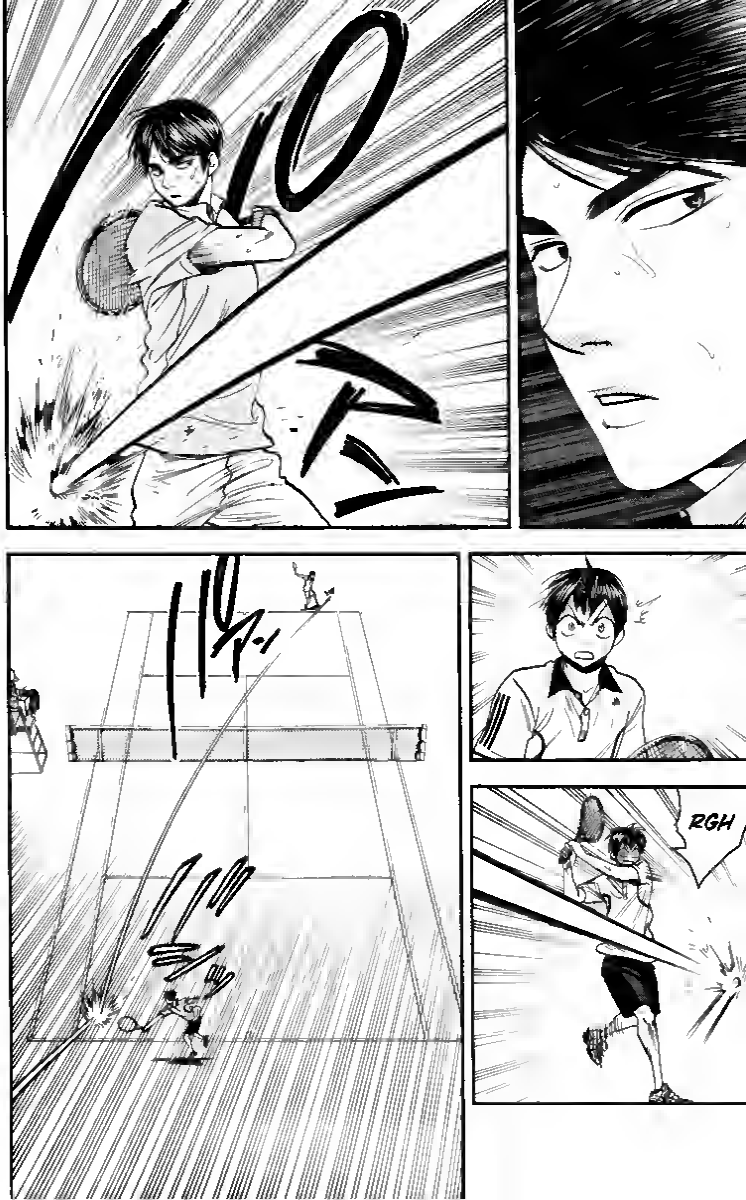
IT ALL HAPPENED UNCON SCIOUSLY.
IN ALL FOUR PREVIOUS CASES I DIDN'T GO IN THE ZONE BECAUSE I WAS TRYING TO.

AND I WASN'T EXPECTING IT IN THIS MATCH, TOO...
AGAINST IDE-KUN, I WENT IN WHILE I WAS TRYING TO DEAL WITH THE PRESSURE,
AGAINST ARAYA-KUN, I FOCUSED ON MY INSTINCT BECAUSE I WAS TOO EXHAUSTED.
AGAINST ALEX, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ZONE WAS.


CAN CONSCIOUSLY REACH A STATE OF UNCONSCI-OUSNESS ..?
IF THIS IS THE CONDITION OF GETTING IN THE ZONE, THEN PLAYERS WHO GET IN THE ZONE BY WILL ..

.WHAT THE HECK DOES THAT MEAN?

SHOULD I STAY AWAY FROM THE ZONE FOR NOW?
BUT THAT WON'T CHANGE THE CURRENT SITUATION...
I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO HAVE A BIT MORE TIME...
TIME
Startle
glance
PRIORITIZE MY INSTINCT... BUT ALSO TRY TO FIND A WAY TO THE ZONE ..
I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING WHILE PLAYING
SINCE I CAN KEEP MY SERVES, I'LL NEED TO FIND SOMETHING DURING THIS GAME
DEFINITELY KEEP!!!


RGH

NO GOOD... I CAN'T FOCUS ON MY INSTINCTS WHEN I'M TRYING TO USE MY HEAD LIKE THIS.
FORGET ABOUT BREAKING THE NEXT GAME, EVEN KEEPING THIS GAME WOULD BE TOUGH.
0 - 15
HIS AGGRESSIVENESS IS GONE.
RGH
MAKE SURE I KEEP THIS ONE FIRST!

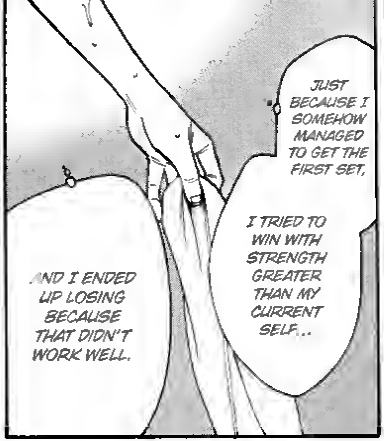
THE PACE IS CONSTANT AND NOT LIKE MARUO.
I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED IF THE GAME IS SO ONE-SIDED.
0 - 30.
バシッ
ハァ…
THERE ARE HESITATIONS IN HIS MOVEMENT...

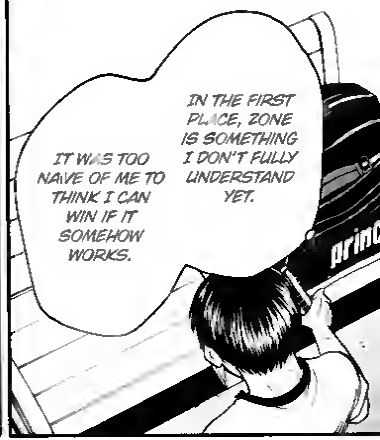
15 - 40.
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?!
15 - 30.
DAMN IT.

NABAE, FINISH IT WITH ONE BLOW!
OKAY, SET POINT!

110キロ
ANYTHING
HA

OUT!
SECOND SET WON BY NABAE. COUNT: 6 - 2.
HERE IT IS!!! AS EXPECTED OF NABAE.
MARUO!!! DON'T GIVE UP YET!!!
NAIVE...
I WAS TOO NAIVE...


JUST BECAUSE I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO GET THE FIRST SET,
I TRIED TO WIN WITH STRENGTH GREATER THAN MY CURRENT SELF..
AND I ENDED UP LOSING BECAUSE THAT DIDN'T WORK WELL.


IN THE FIRST PLACE, ZONE IS SOMETHING I DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND YET.
IT WAS TOO NAVE OF ME TO THINK I CAN WIN IF IT SOMEHOW WORKS.

FINAL SET..

EVEN THOUGH I'M TESTING WHETHER I CAN BECOME A PRO OR NOT...
AND IF I WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A LIVING WITH THIS...
WHAT'S THE POINT IF I DON'T TRY TO FIGHT WITH THE SKILLS I'VE BEEN WORKING ON TILL NOW?

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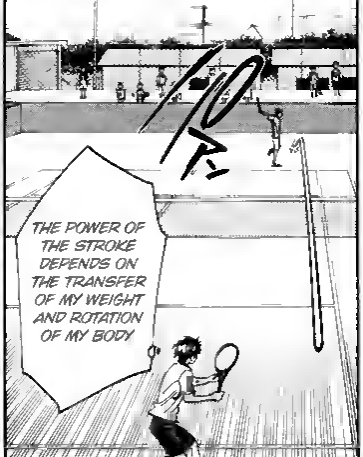
#177: UNKNOWN FACTOR
ガ
LBS 1 NABAE YUU 460
LBS 30 MARUO EICHIRO 620
ガ
YOU CAN'T CALL THAT A "CHALLENGE". IT'S JUST SELF-DE-STRUCTION.
I WAS RE-- LYING ON SOMETHING CALLED "THE ZONE" THAT I DIDN'T EVEN UN-DERSTAND PROPERLY.
THE BIGGEST PROBLEM,
IS THAT I DON'T HAVE A VISION OF ME DEFEATING NABAE-KUN.
I CAN'T STAY LIKE THIS ..
ゴ"ゥ
ゴ"ゥ

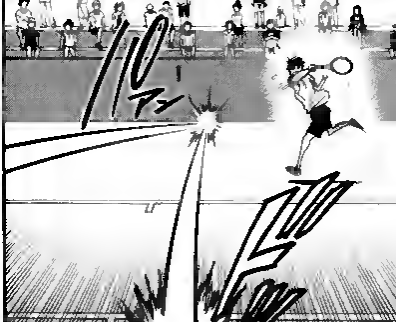
THEN, HOW CAN I GET A VISION OF MY VICTORY...?
THERE ARE TWO THINGS I CAN THINK OF..
ONE IS RAISING THE STRENGTH OF MY BASIC STROKES.
IF I CAN INCREASE THE POWER OF ALL MY SHOTS, EVEN IF HE TARGETS MY FLAT, I WON'T BE THIS HELPLESS
THE OTHER IS ADDING MORE VARIETY TO MY CHANGE OF PACE
IF I CAN DO THAT, I CAN DODGE NABAE-KUN'S ATTACKS EVEN IF HE GRASPS MY PATTERN.
IF THESE TWO WORK TOGETHER...
もや〜

TIME!
BUT...
I CAN SEE THE VISION OF MY VICTORY!
...I THINK.
AND I WOULD HAVE TO TRY A NEW CHANGE OF PACE PATTERNS ON TOP OF THAT ..
IF I RAISE THE POWER OF ALL MY STROKES DURING THIS MATCH, I CAN'T AVOID MAKING MORE MISTAKES.
DON'T BE AFRAID TO LOSE...
IF I'M GOING TO SELF-DESTRUCT, I'LL DO THIS.
BUT SINCE THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN WORKING ON TILL NOW, I HAVE TO GO WITH THIS.

FINAL SET...
IN ORDER TO BEAT HIM IN THE NEXT ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR,
I WANT TO SEE HOW FAR I CAN EXECUTE THE VISION I HAVE RIGHT NOW!
BUT I DEFINITELY WON'T GIVE UP THIS MATCH.
I WILL REALIZE THE VISION RIGHT HERE!!

ARGH
HIS AGGRESSIVENESS IS BACK.
HE'S QUICK TO RECOMPOSE.
OUT!
15 - 0.


THE POWER OF THE STROKE DEPENDS ON THE TRANSFER OF MY WEIGHT AND ROTATION OF MY BODY



IT SOME-HOW WENT IN...

AS I MOVE MY WEIGHT, UNWIND MY TWISTED BODY

LAND MY PIVOT LEG AS QUICKLY AS POSSI-BLE

QUICKLY!!!!

HA
ドッ
OUT.
GAME, NABAE. 1 - 0.
SHOOT...
OUT, 30 - 0.
BUT MY SHOTS ARE PRETTY GOOD!!!

丸尾栄一郎神田
精神力 A
判断力 B
瞬時性 D?
フォア B
バック B
B
B
HE KEPT ON DOING THE UNEXPECTED DURING THIS KIND OF SITUATION.
I SHOULDN'T JUST CALL THIS RECKLESS..

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN THE BEST DECISION...
IS TO FINISH HIM QUICKLY!!!

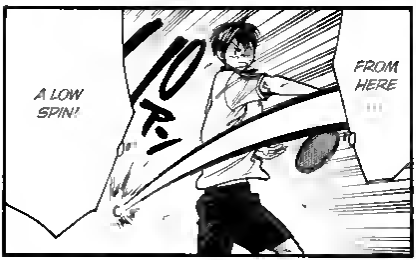
GAME, NABAE. 2 – 0. FINAL SET.
NABAE'S SUDDEN BREAK!
THAT'S NABAE FOR YOU.
MARUO CAN'T WIN IF HE KEEPS MAKING MISTAKES.
THIS IS PRETTY TOUGH, ISN'T IT?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, AOI-KUN?

GAME, NABAE. 3 - 0.

BUT SINCE THIS IS ALL I HAVE, I WON'T HESITATE ANYMORE...

IF I RAISE THE POWER TOO MUCH, I WILL MAKE AN ERROR...
HE WILL CORNER ME IF MY NEW CHANGE OF PACE DOESN'T WORK PROPERLY...

TRYING A BRAND NEW PATTERN TO ATTACK...


A LOW SPIN!
FROM HERE

I'LL KEEP ON GOING!

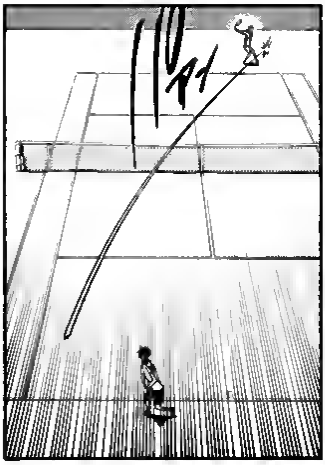
THAT WAS JUST A CHANCE BALL!!!
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN USE AS A HINT?
MY FIELD OF VISION GETS TOO NARROW WHEN I'M THINKING ON THE SPOT
0 – 15.
HE'S TRYING SOME-THING?
AH...!

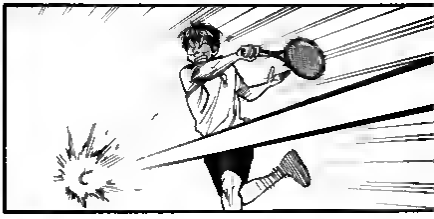
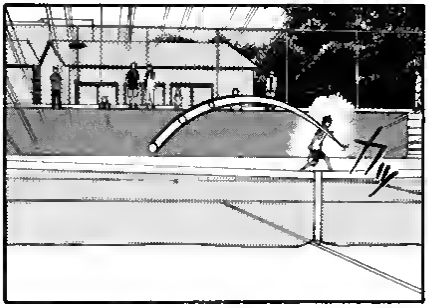
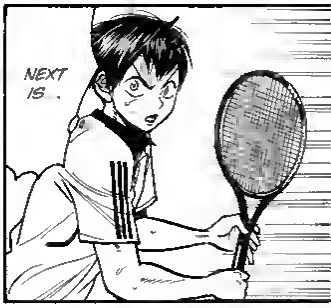
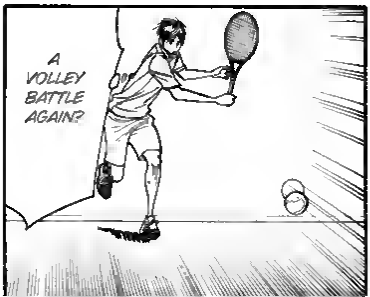
ATTACK!
ALL IN!
HERE, THE THING IWASA-KUN DID BEFORE...
LOB VOLLEY!
RGH
OUT. 0 - 30.
NO GOOD.. BUT OTHER PEOPLE'S STRATEGIES CAN BE A GOOD INSPIRATION

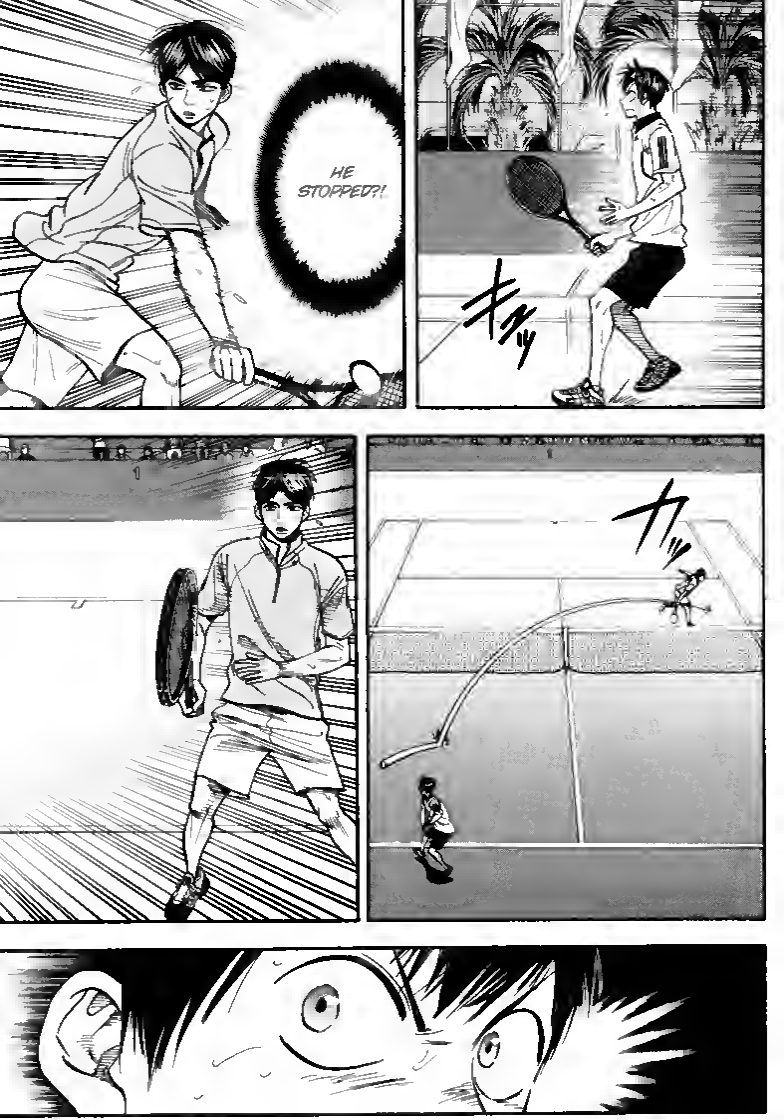
IT WAS THE SAME BEFORE, TOO.
MARUO-KUN TRIES TO TEST SOMETHING NEW WHEN HE IS CORNERED.
THESE ARE ATTACKS THAT AREN'T THE DATA.
IS HE TESTING MANY DIFFERENT PATTERNS?
HE'S COMING UP WITH SOMETHING NEW AND EVOLVING IT...
IT'S DIFFERENT FROM HOW I CHANGE MY PLAY STYLE.
WHAT FUELS HIS GROWTH SPEED ON PAR WITH IKE?
IS THIS SEEMINGLY RECKLESS CHANGE?

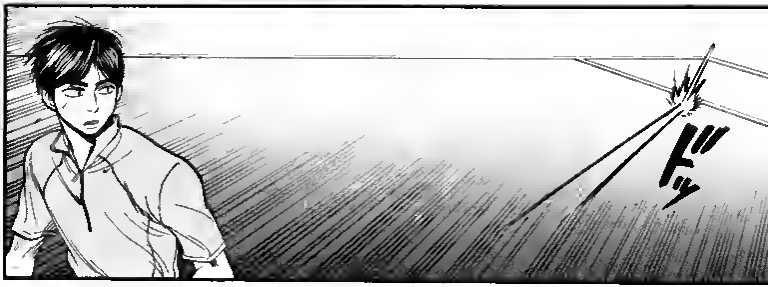
HA
GAME, MARUO. 3 – 1.
OKAY! I SOME-HOW KEPT!
IS MY CONDI-TION'S GET-TING BETTER, TOO?
優一郎
IN CONTRAST TO WHAT EIICHIRO IN-TENDED, HIS CHANGE IN MINDSET,

WAS TAKING HIM VERY CLOSE TO THE ZONE.
I FEEL LIKE I'VE GOTTEN CLOSER TO THE ZONE AFTER ABAN-DONING IT...
0 - 15.
I FAILED LAST TIME BECAUSE I WAS THINK-ING TOO MUCH ABOUT THIS!
NO, NO!
I WON'T THINK ABOUT THE ZONE ANYMORE!!!






NEXT IS .

A VOLLEY BATTLE AGAIN?


HE STOPPED?!
キン
カッ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0 - 30.
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ハァッ

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Proofreader: Reika
Cleaner: Stark & Rain
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Checker: LordLestat

#178: VISION

I FEEL LIKE I'M CLOSE TO THE ZONE, BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW!

THE ATTACK TAKUMA-SAN USED ON ME WAY BACK BECAME A HINT.

ANYWAY, USING THE DATA I HAVE SO FAR AS INSPIRATION, I'LL COME UP WITH AS MANY CHANGES OF PACE AS POSSIBLE, AND EXECUTE THEM WITH STRONG STROKES..

YES!

IT'S HIS FIRST CHANCE TO BREAK SINCE THE FIRST SET.

A TENNIS THAT TRIES TO CONTROL YOUR EMOTION RATHER THAN SUPPRESSING IT OR RELEASING IT,

CAN BE VERY UNSTABLE, BUT IT IS HIGHLY THREATENING WHEN IT WORKS.

NOT ONLY DID HIS PATTERNS BECOME HARDER TO READ,

THE STRONG SHOTS THAT COMES FROM TIME TO TIME ARE INCREASING THE VARIETY OF HIS RALLIES

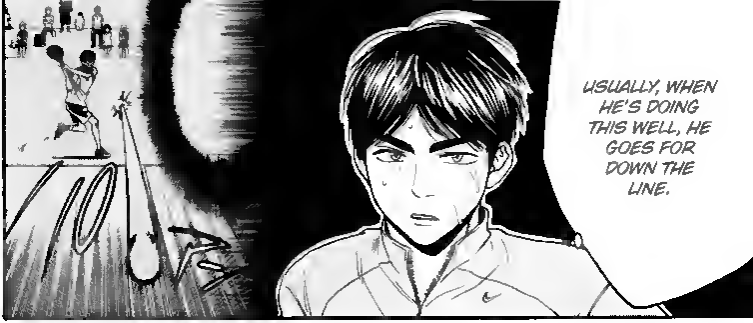
I NEED TO TAKE HIM DOWN WHEN I HAVE A ONE BREAK LEAD!
10-A

*Ball that goes into the opponent's side

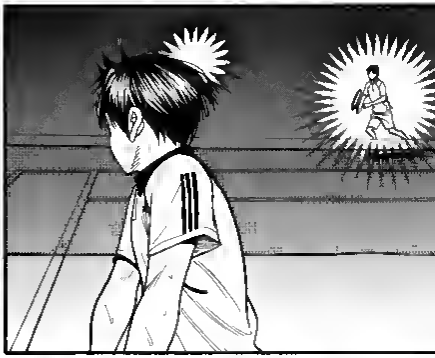
HIS SERVE WAS GOOD, AND THE CORD BALL IS JUST BY CHANCE. IT CAN'T BE HELPED
15 - 30.
TOUGH LUCK, MARUO~

30 - 30.
SERVICE ACE!
THAT'S IT, NABAE!!! HE CAUGHT UP INSTANTLY!!!
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THIS ONE EITHER...
110キロ

IT'S IN...! BUT IT'S WEAK, SO HE'LL ATTACK...
...TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE WEAK BALL JUST NOW, AND FORCE THIS...
DOWN THE LINE, FULL SWING!!!

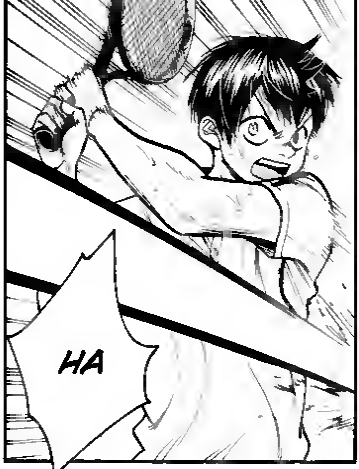

USUALLY, WHEN HE'S DOING THIS WELL, HE GOES FOR DOWN THE LINE.

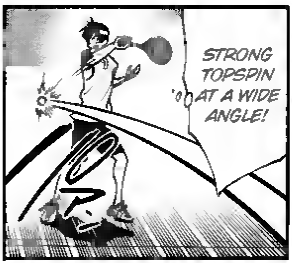
NO...

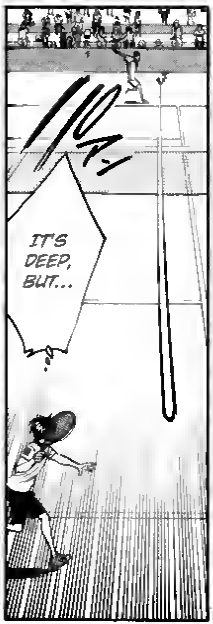


30 - 40.
WOAH ..
WOWWW-WWWW
SO GOOD
YEAH!!!

I'LL MAKE A NEW CHANGE OF PACE PATTERNS THAT I HAVEN'T USED BEFORE.
IF NABAE-KUN IS READING MY SHOTS BASED ON PREVIOUS DATA,
TRY TO MIX SHOTS WITH INCREASED POWER AMONGST THESE PATTERNS AT AN EARLY STAGE.
IF I CAN INCREASE THE SIZE OF NABAE-KUN'S DATA WITH THAT, HE WILL HESITATE EVEN AGAINST PATTERNS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY USED.
BUT IF I THINK TOO MUCH, MY VIEW GETS NARROW, SO I NEED TO WATCH MY OPPONENT CAREFULLY SO I CAN MAKE CHANGES INSTANTLY...
THIS IS IT! THIS IS MY WINNING VISION!
...BUT THIS IS SO FREAKING HARD!


HA

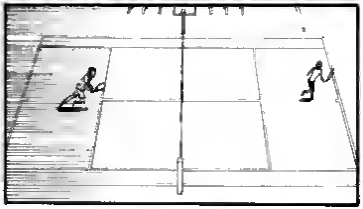

STRONG TOPSPIN AT A WIDE ANGLE!


IT'S DEEP, BUT...

I RE-TURNED THE SE-RVE!

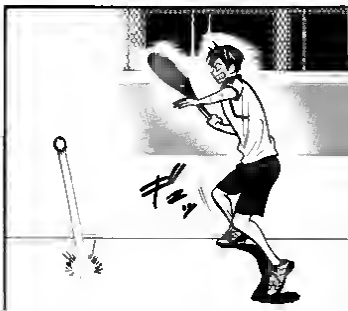
ONCE I HIT A GOOD SHOT, CHANGE THE PACE BY MOVING UP QUICKLY!

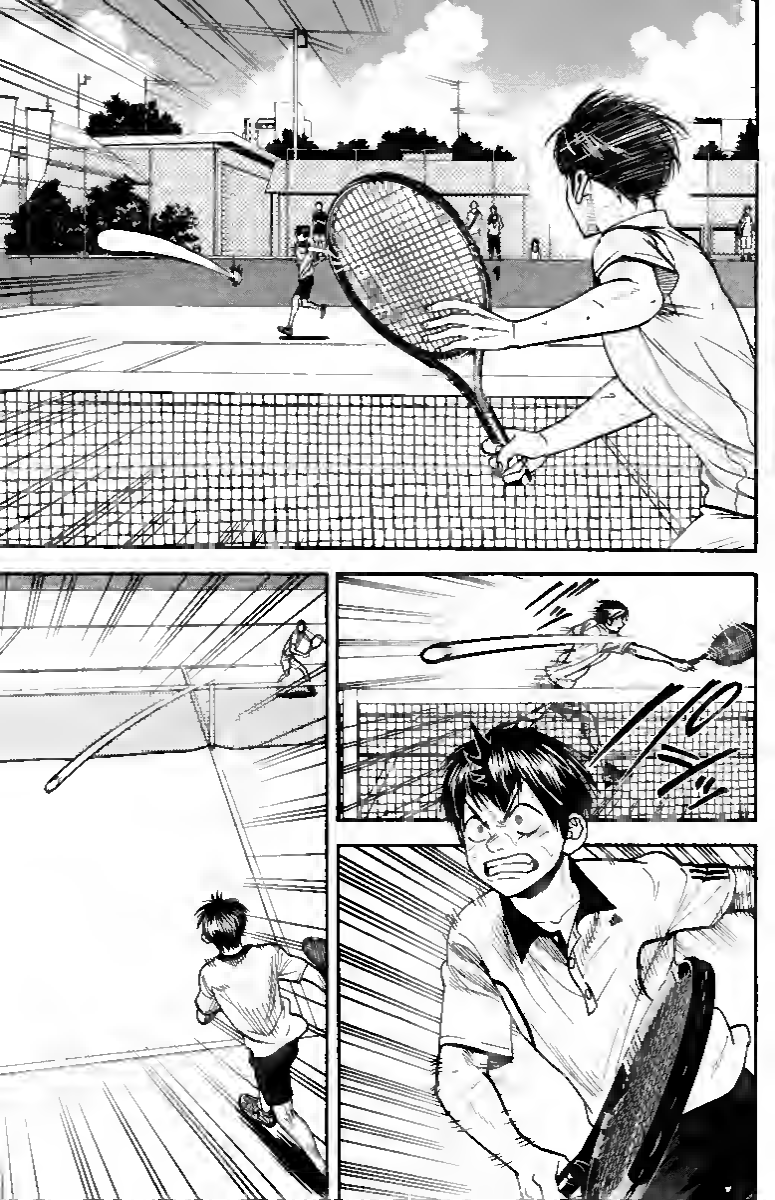
HE READ IT?!

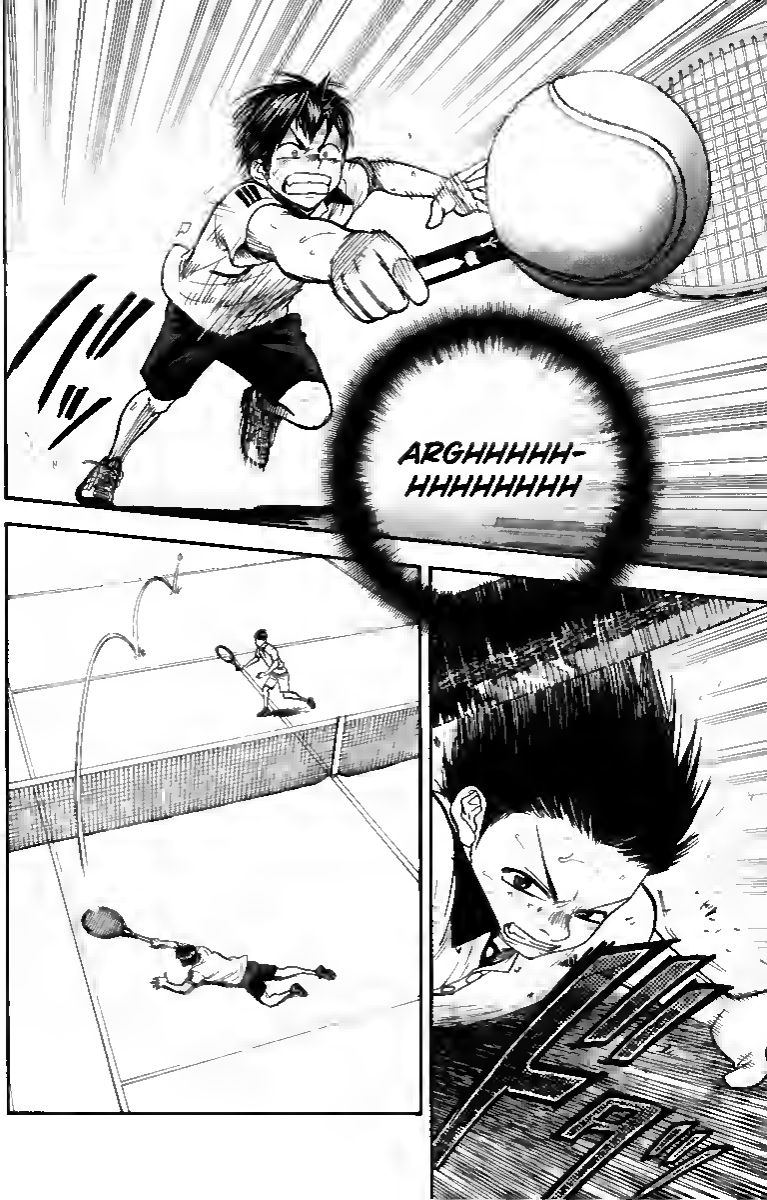


NRGHH

EVEN IF I'M AT A DISAD-VANTAGE, NEXT IS A STRONG FLAT...






ARGHHHHH-
HHHHHHHH
FWOOSH

GAME, MARUO. 4 – 3, NABAE LEAD. FINAL SET.
IT... WENT IN...

YES!!!
MARUO'S BREAK IS BACK!!!
おおおおお

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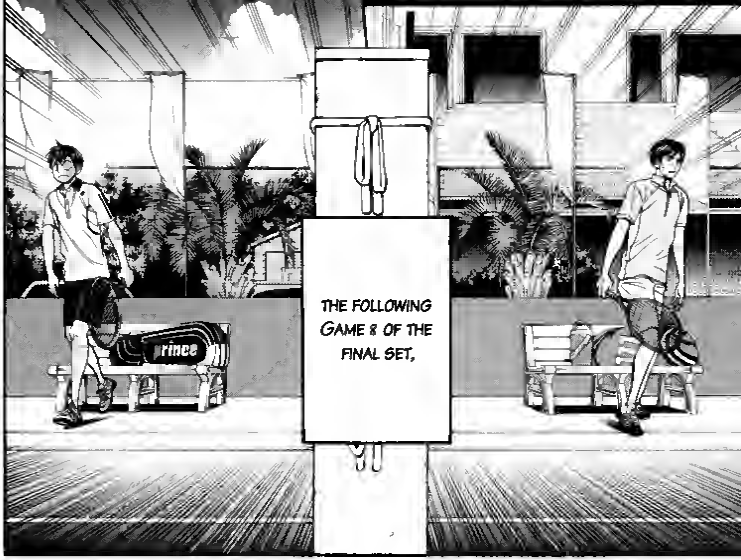
#179: FULL ATTACK, FULL DEFENSE

WELL, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT NABAE WILL DO FROM HERE ..
BUT I HAVE NO TIME TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT
THAT'S SOMETHING
THAT BASTARD HE BROKE THE GAME NABAE WANTED TO DEFEND NO MATTER WHAT.
ARAYA HIROSHI
721
562
OKADA TAKAYUK
I'LL GO LAND A BLOW, TOO!

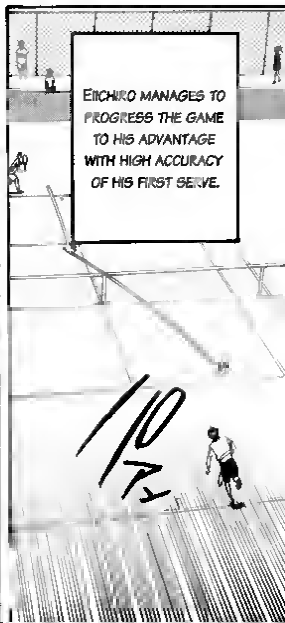
AN UNEXPECTED PLAYER SUDDENLY BECAME A CANDIDATE.
...EVEN STILL, HE'S BEEN UNDEFEATED SO FAR.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE NARAE-KUN HAD SUCH A HARD TIME.
THERE HAS BEEN LOT OF TALK ON WHO WILL BE THE ONE TO BREAK NARAE-KUN'S FORTRESS.

はっ
THANKS TO THAT, I WAS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW HARD THAT IS
IT WAS JUST ONE GAME, BUT I WAS ABLE TO REALIZE MY "WINNING VISION"!!!
IN TERMS OF STRATEGY, I NEED BOTH "CREATIVITY" THAT WILL BRING BRAND NEW ATTACK PATTERNS,
AND "EXECUTION" THAT WILL TURN ALL THAT INTO A POINT.
IN TERMS OF MY PSYCHOLOGY, I NEED BOTH "COMPOSURE" THAT WILL MAINTAIN MY CURRENT SITUATION,
AND "GUTS" TO CHASE AFTER THE BALL AS IF MY LIFE'S ON THE LINE.
おう
FOR BOTH STRATEGY AND PSYCHOLOGY, I HAVE TO MAINTAIN A GOOD BALANCE OF THINGS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO COEXIST.
BY DOING THAT, I CAN REALIZE MY "WINNING VISION".

SINCE THIS IS A CLOSE MATCH, I WOULD LIKE TO REMOVE MY EMOTIONS WITHOUT THROWING AWAY A POINT.
#57
#57
NOT JUST NEGATIVE FEELINGS LIKE RAGE OR REGRET,
WITH THE PUREST MIND AS POSSIBLE,
BUT ALSO REMOVE POSITIVE FEELINGS THAT RUSH FOR VICTORY
OBJECTIVELY OBSERVE ME AND MY OPPONENT,
AND MAKE THE CORRECT DECISION
ON THE BEST WAY TO FIGHT THIS BATTLE

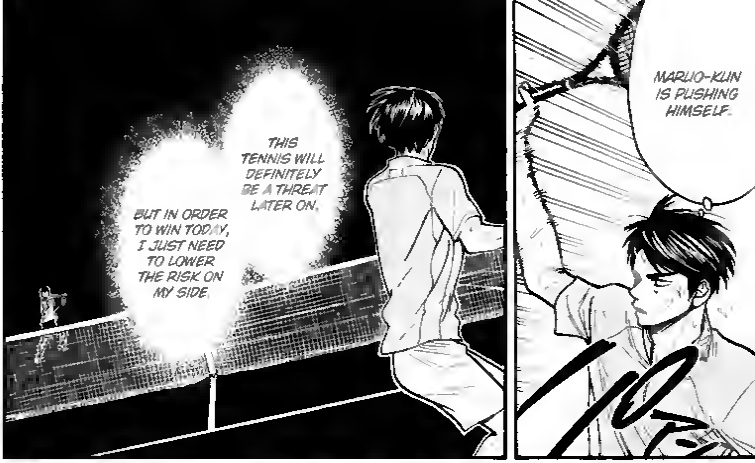

prince
THE FOLLOWING GAME 8 OF THE FINAL SET,

HE SUCCEEDS IN TAKING THE POINT BEFORE NADAE LAUNCHES A HIGH RISK ATTACK,


EIICHIRO MANAGES TO PROGRESS THE GAME TO HIS ADVANTAGE WITH HIGH ACCURACY OF HIS FIRST SERVE.

AND KEEPS THE GAME.

GAME, MARUO. 4 - 4. FINAL SET.
YES
He finally catches up to Nabae.
10
Fwoo


THIS TENNIS WILL DEFINITELY BE A THREAT LATER ON.
BUT IN ORDER TO WIN TODAY, I JUST NEED TO LOWER THE RISK ON MY SIDE.
MARUO-KUN IS PUSHING HIMSELF.

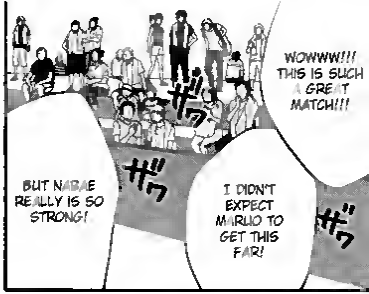
CONCENTRATE MORE ON THE SITUATION IN FRONT OF ME
ALSO, TO PREPARE FOR UNEXPECTED PATTERNS, RATHER THAN FOCUSING TOO MUCH ON DATA
NARROW DOWN JUST TO TOP SPIN SINCE THAT'S SAFER
IT'S TOO RISKY TO TARGET BOTH FLAT AND TOPSPIN

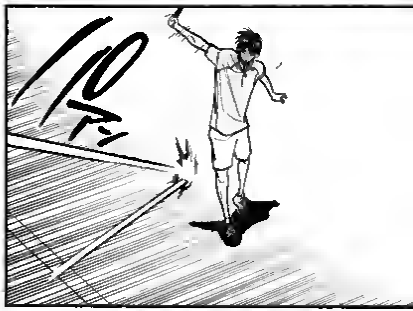
I'LL WIN AGAINST THIS CURRENT SHOT!
WHAT COMES LATER IS FOR LATER...

HA
ドッ
OUT.
30 - 15.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE MISTAKES THAT COME FROM GOING WITH MY "WINNING VISION"
SINCE THEY CAN'T BE HELPED, DON'T BE AFRAID OF THEM
EVEN IF IT'S JUST A MISTAKE WHEN VIEWED FROM OUTSIDE,
THIS IS PROBABLY THE BEST FOR ME
AGAINST THE ALL-JAPAN CHAMPION THAT I WAS COMPLETELY HELPLESS BACK THEN.
I'M HAVING A CLOSE MATCH IN THE FINAL SET.

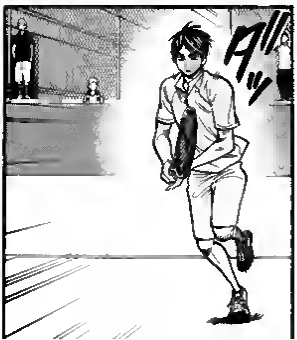
AND DESPERATELY CAME UP WITH CHANGE OF PACE. ALL THE THINGS I'VE DONE SO FAR
WENT THROUGH AN EVEN GREATER BODY TRANSFOR-MATION,
STRENGTH-ENED MY SERVES,
SINCE THEN, I STUDIED IN FLORIDA,
IS PRODUCING THIS SHOT!!!

MARUO-KUN MIGHT HAVE THE UPPER HAND WHEN IT COMES TO SPIRIT,
HMM...


BUT NABAE REALLY IS SO STRONG!
I DIDN'T EXPECT MARUO TO GET THIS FAR!
WOWWW!!! THIS IS SUCH A GREAT MATCH!!!



HE'S MOVING UP!



BUT .

GAME, NABAE. 5 - 4, FINAL SET.
YEAH, THIS IS IT..
EVEN WITH A DIFFICULT VOLLEY, HE CAN SCORE SAFELY WHILE MAINTAINING HIS COOL

THIS LEVEL OF COMPOSURE AND TECHNIQUE EVEN UNDER THIS SITUATION
IS WHY HE REMAINS UNCHALLENGED ON HIS THRONE.
GO, GO, MARUO!
YOU CAN'T LOSE AFTER COMING THIS FAR!
DON'T LOSE, NABAE!
JUST PLAY LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO!!!

110 アン
110 アン
THE MATCH TURNED TO A SITUATION WHERE BOTH PLAYERS MANAGED TO KEEP THEIR GAME WITHOUT TOO MUCH TROUBLE.

THE MORE POINTS PLAYED BY EACH PLAYER,
THE HARDER IT WAS FOR THE PLAYER WHO IS CARRYING THE LARGER RISK.
OUT.
GAME NABAE.
6 – 5.
FINAL SET.

IT'S NOT THAT EASY TO REALIZE THE "WINNING VISION" OVER AND OVER
THE LONGER THIS GAME GOES...
THE HARDER IT IS FOR ME TO WIN
THEN I NEED TO TRY TO FINISH THIS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...
SINCE THE FINAL SET KEEPS ON GOING UNTIL THERE IS A TWO GAME DIFFERENCE..
I WILL KEEP THIS AND BREAK ON THE NEXT ONE
Then if you really win against that person,
I might reconsider... you playing tennis...

AND I WILL KEEP THE LAST ONE AND WIN!!!
I AM EXPECTING A LONG MATCH... BUT I WILL END IT QUICKLY.
TIME!

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Translator: Ruggia

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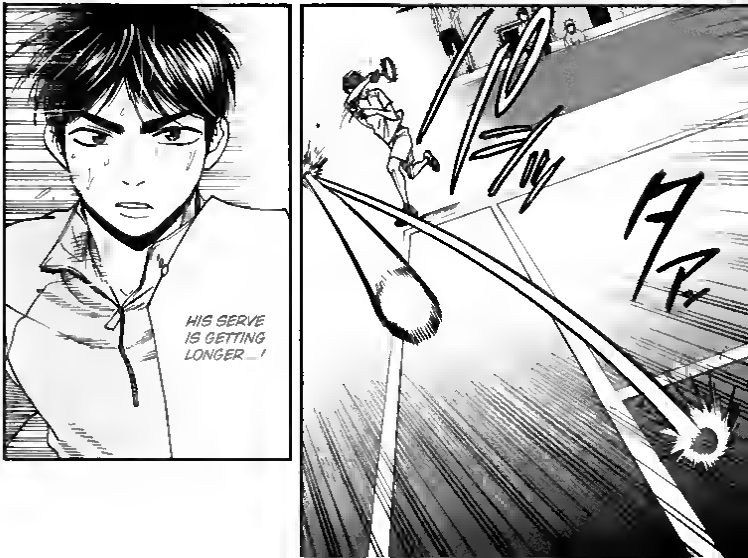
Q.C Checker: LordLestat

AT LEAST THREE MORE GAMES FOR ME TO WIN REGARDLESS OF WHAT STRATEGY NABAE-KUN CHOOSES...
HOW FAR CAN I GO WITH MY "WINNING VISION"?
#180: BREAK 2

HA
THE IMPORTANT THING FOR REALIZING THAT VISION IS THE BALANCE BETWEEN MY STRATEGY AND MY PSYCHOLOGY
GO ALL OUT... BUT DEFINITELY MAKE THIS FIRST SERVE!!!


HIS SERVE IS GETTING LONGER...!

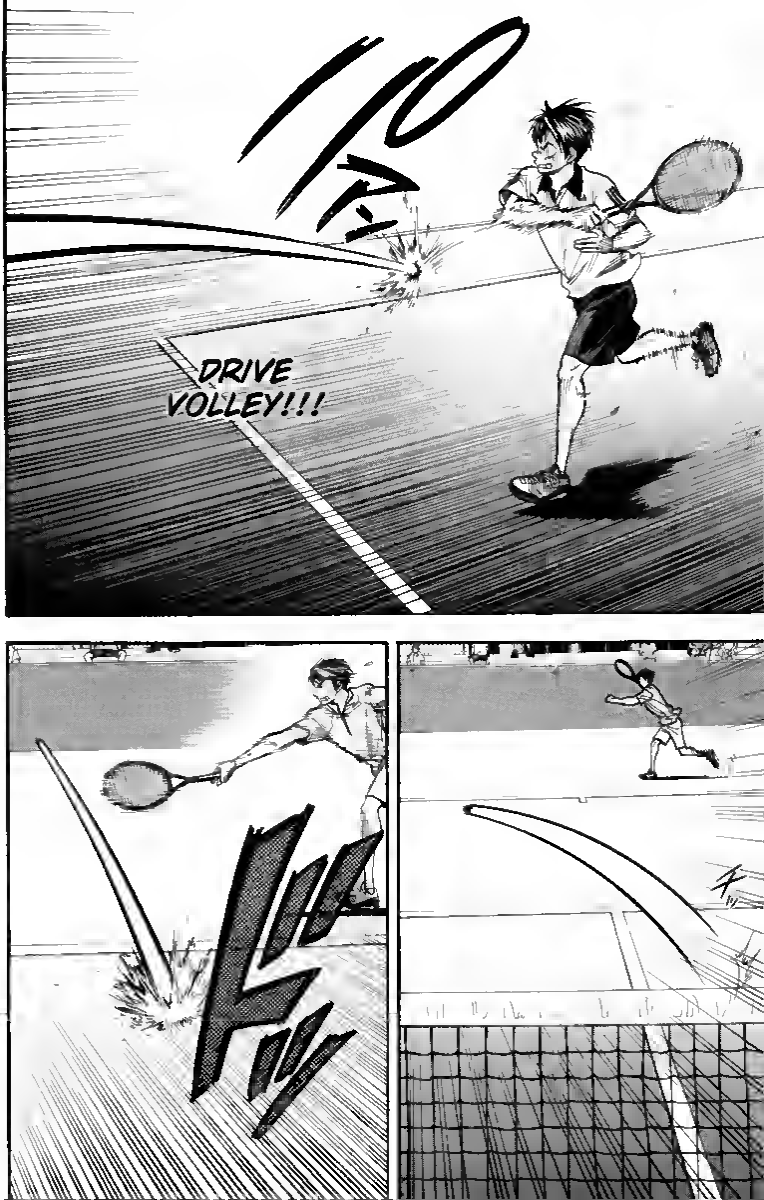
IF HE'S GOING TO RAISE THE STAKES THIS MUCH,
FOCUS ON DEFENSE ON RETURN GAME, TOO.
THAT'S ALL I NEED FOR NOW!
OUT.
0 - 15.

NOT FEARING THE MISTAKES AND PUSHING THROUGH THE "WINNING VISION" IS THE BEST THING I CAN DO...
HE'S GOTTEN MORE DEFENSIVE. BUT I CAN'T CALL IT A "WINNING VISION" IF I LOSE TO THAT
I ALREADY MADE MY DECISION!!!

ATTACK HIM EARLY ON WITH POWER!
MRGH
DO SOMETHING UNEXPECTED WITH CHANGE OF PACE..

!
HE HASN'T MOVED UP
チラッ
A SUDDEN LOB WHEN HE HAD THE UPPER HAND?

!?
HE'S MOVING UP RIGHT NOW...?!
WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO?!


DRIVE
VOLLEY!!!

15 – 15.
OKAY...!
THAT WAS DANGEROUS,
BUT I WAS ABLE TO PULL THROUGH WHILE STAYING PRETTY CALM!
I CAN DO IT!!!
I CAN WIN!!!
I'LL DEFINITELY WIN!!!
IF I BEAT NABAE-KUN, THEY WILL ACKNOWLEDGE MY DECISION TO BECOME A PRO.
I CAN DO WHAT I LIKE WITHOUT MAKING THEM WORRY!

HA
IF HE MANAGES TO MAKE SUCH GOOD SHOTS, THERE'S A LIMIT TO HOW FAR I CAN GO WITH JUST DEFENSE...
WHILE MAKING SURE MY DEFENSE IS SOLID...

FINISH IT WITH ONE STROKE WHEN ATTACKING...!

RGH
トゥ
トゥ

15 - 30.
Phew
HOW DO YOU LAND A DROP SHOT RIGHT THERE?!
HOW CAN HE STAY SO CALM?

Wilson

ARGH
HERE'S THE MATCH POINT ...!!!
15 - 40.
NOT YET...

TURN THIS PRESSURE INTO MY STRENGTH...

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HA
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...OUT! GAME SET AND MATCH WON BY NABAE.
COUNT: 4 - 6. 6 - 2. 7 - 5.

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Baby Steps

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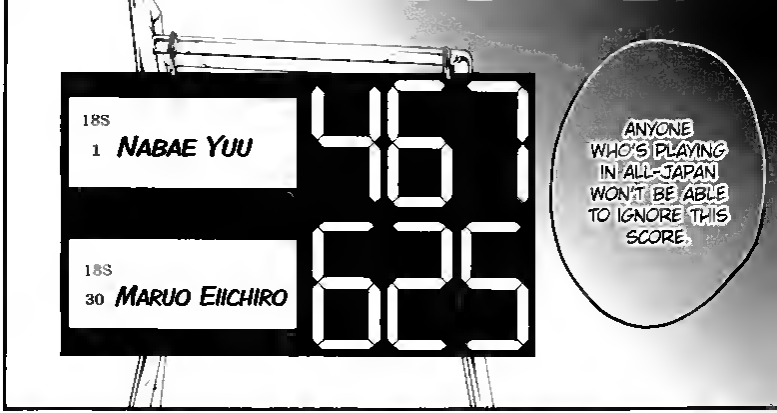
#181: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AT THIS RATE, I WOULD BE IN TROUBLE IN ALL-JAPAN THREE WEEKS LATER.
THIS MUCH IMPROVEMENT IN JUST 9 MONTHS... I CAN'T MAKE ANY SIMPLE CALCULATION, BUT
HOWEVER, A SUDDEN CHANGE IN PRACTICE SCHEDULE WILL CARRY A RISK.
THEN THE QUESTION IS, WHAT I SHOULD CHANGE DURING THIS SHORT PERIOD, AND HOW?
I NEED TO LOOK EVERY-THING OVER FROM THE GROUND UP..

MAYBE I SHOULD FOCUS ON WHAT COMES LATER... RATHER THAN THIS COMPETI-TION.
AS EXPECTED OF NABAE HE NEVER LETS ANY-THING SLIP
NAH, THIS ONE WAS PRETTY DANGER-OUS.
EITHER WAY, WE HAVE A NEW DARK HORSE IN THE HOUSE.
DID HE?
LOOKS LIKE MARUO-KUN JUST SNATCHED A LOT OF AT-TENTION.
HMM . HMM HMMM.
WOW~ THIS IS INTER-ESTING.


18S
1 NABAE YUU
467
18S
30 MARUO EIICHIRO
625
ANYONE WHO'S PLAYING IN ALL-JAPAN WON'T BE ABLE TO IGNORE THIS SCORE.

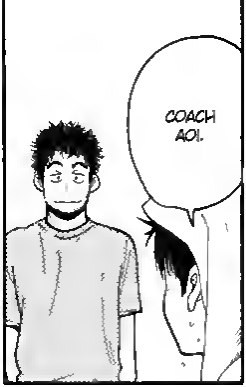
.....

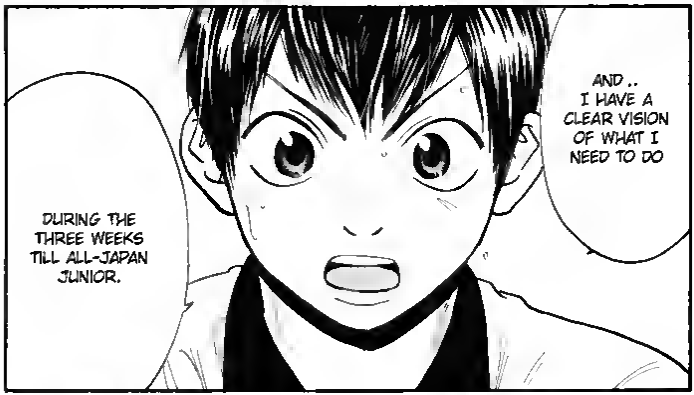
PLEASE HELP ME OUT WHEN I ASK FOR AN INTER-VIEW.

KANTO BEST 4
WELL, IS IT GOOD ENOUGH?

prince

THANKS TO YOUR ADVICE, I WAS ABLE TO TRY MANY THINGS AND IT WAS REALLY HELPFUL.
N-NAH... THIS IS THE BEST I CAN DO RIGHT NOW.


COACH AOI.

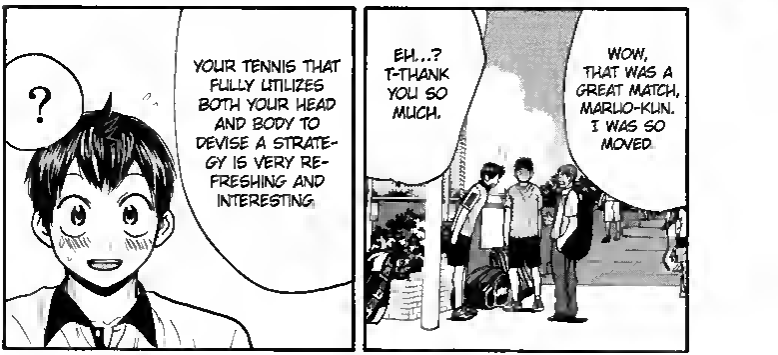

DURING THE THREE WEEKS TILL ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR.
AND.. I HAVE A CLEAR VISION OF WHAT I NEED TO DO

?
WELL, IT'S THE SAME FOR ME, TOO.

HAHAHA, SOUNDS GOOD

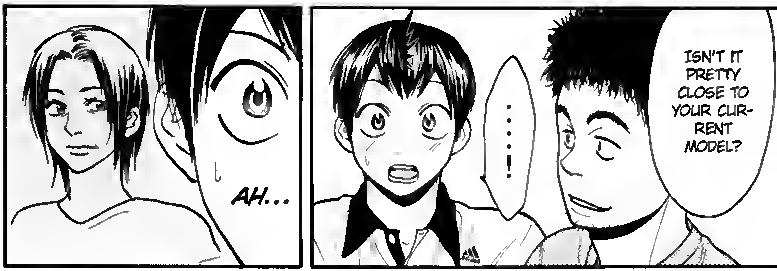
HOW ARE YOU, AOI-SAN?
AH.
THAT'S RIGHT. THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT TO INTRODUCE TO YOU.

THIS IS ONOZAWA-SAN.
HE'S FROM THE COMPANY THAT MAKES THE RACKET YOU USE.
NICE TO MEET YOU.


WOW, THAT WAS A GREAT MATCH, MARUO-KUN. I WAS SO MOVED.
EH...? T-THANK YOU SO MUCH.
YOUR TENNIS THAT FULLY UTILIZES BOTH YOUR HEAD AND BODY TO DEVISE A STRATEGY IS VERY REFRESHING AND INTERESTING.
?

HUH ..? DOES THAT MEAN...
YUP. WE WANT YOU TO TRY SEVERAL OF OUR RACKETS AS A TESTER AND HELP DEVELOP OUR FUTURE PRODUCTS.
THAT IS WHY,
WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO TRY OUR NEW RACKET. WHAT DO YOU SAY?
ME...?
THAT'S JUST LIKE ARAYA-KUN AND NABAE-KUN...
THIS IS OUR BRAND NEW MODEL, SO WE PROMISE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY AT A MUCH HIGHER PERFORMANCE THAN YOUR CURRENT ONE.
JUST LIKE HOW YOUR TECHNIQUES KEEP IMPROVING,
RACKET TECHNOLOGIES ARE ADVANCING AT A RAPID RATE, TOO.

UMM... THEN IT'S OKAY...
FOR ME TO USE THIS?
OF COURSE... THIS IS A MODEL WE CHOSE
AFTER LOOKING AT YOUR PLAYING STYLE, SO IT SHOULD BE A GOOD FIT.


ISN'T IT PRETTY CLOSE TO YOUR CURRENT MODEL?
.....!
AH...

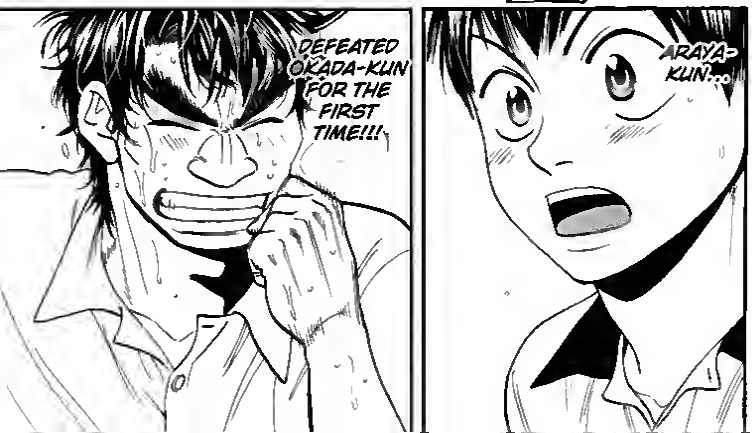
UMM... I'M REALLY GRATEFUL, BUT...
I WON'T BE ABLE TO BECOME A PRO IF I DON'T MANAGE TO WIN THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR...
WILL THAT STILL BE OKAY?

I WILL TRY MY BEST IN ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR
TO BE WORTHY OF THAT RACKET
I'M SORRY... THIS KID IS JUST TOO UPTIGHT.
HAHAHA... IS THAT SO? LOOKS LIKE WE WILL NEED YOU TO WORK EVEN HARDER.
BUT...
IT'S FINE ... JUST TELL THEM AFTER THAT HAPPENS.
THEN PLEASE, LET ME TRY IT.
IF THAT'S STILL OKAY,
A-AMAZING, RIGHT..?
THIS IS...!!
AH, YES.
HAHAHA. NOT AT ALL IF IT DOESN'T FIT YOU, JUST TELL US RIGHT AWAY.
Thank you so much
THEN WE WILL DISCUSS THE DETAILS AT A LATER DATE

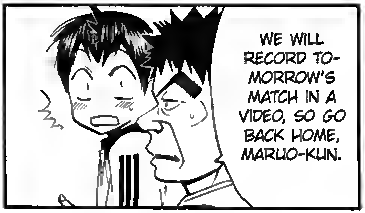
EI-CHAN!
AH, NACCHAN
YOU FINISHED YOUR MATCH ALREADY?
YUP! A STRAIGHT VICTORY.
HOW ABOUT YOU?
I WAS NO GOOD.
I SEE...
!?
BUT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS A GOOD MATCH
YEAH... IT'S DISHEARTENING, BUT I'M SATISFIED

YEAHHHHHHH
GAME SET AND MATCH WON BY ARAYA.
COUNT:
7 - 5.
2 - 6.
6 - 4.

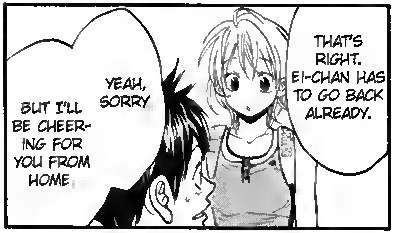
ARAYA'S GOTTEN SUPER STRONG!
!
NAH, IT'S ALL THANKS TO HIS SHOTS TILL THEN!!!
HE MADE THE LAST ONE WITH BRUTE FORCE!!!

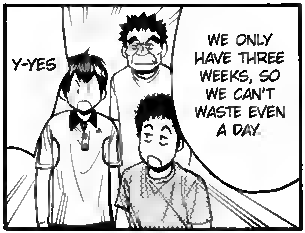

DEFEATED OKADA-KUN FOR THE FIRST TIME!!!
ARAYA-KUN...

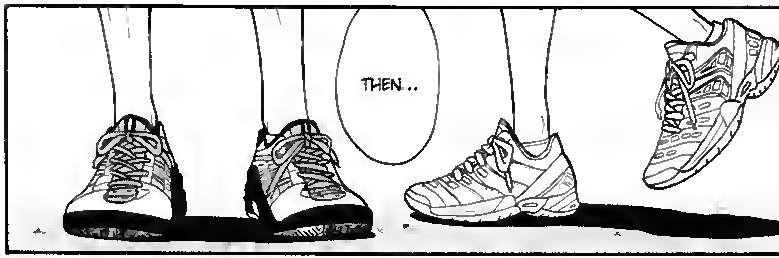
THAT MEANS... THE FINALS WILL BE NABAE-KUN VS ARAYA-KUN!


WE WILL RECORD TOMORROW'S MATCH IN A VIDEO, SO GO BACK HOME, MARUO-KUN.

BUT I ALSO WANT TO GO BACK AND PRACTICE, TOO..
I WANT TO STAY FOR ONE MORE DAY AND WATCH...


THAT'S RIGHT. EI-CHAN HAS TO GO BACK ALREADY.
YEAH, SORRY
BUT I'LL BE CHEERING FOR YOU FROM HOME

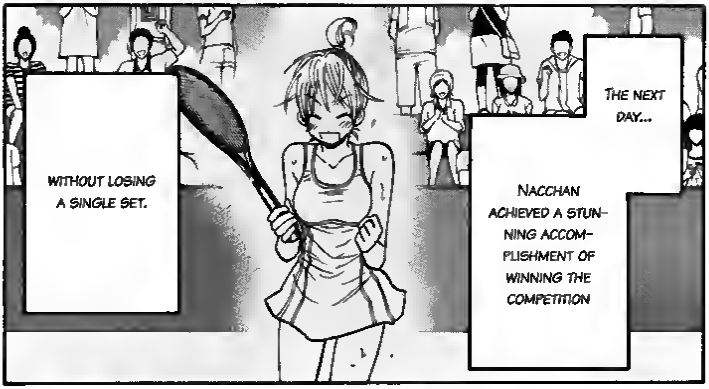

Y-YES
WE ONLY HAVE THREE WEEKS, SO WE CAN'T WASTE EVEN A DAY


THEN..

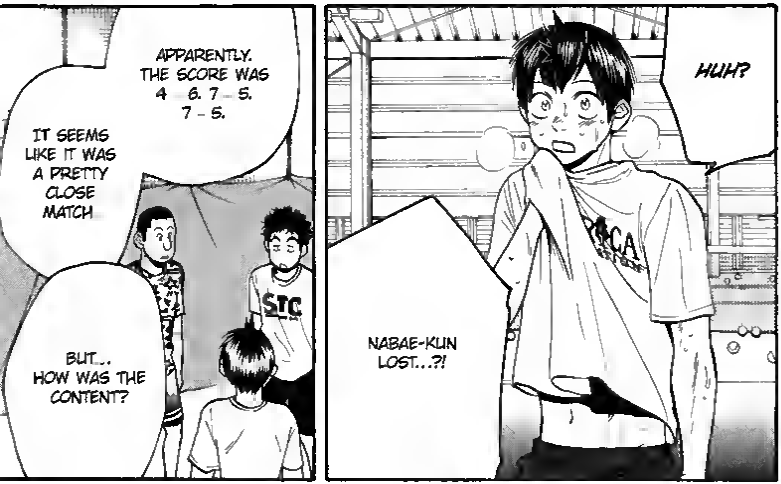
FOR OUR DAY OFF TWO DAYS FROM NOW...
MAKE PLANS ON WHERE TO GO, OKAY?
Y-
YES!
OKAY, LET'S GO MARUO!!!
Stop flirting around
THE FIVE DAYS OF KANTO JUNIOR IS NOW OVER...
はっ
はっ
Sakuragi

ハッ
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
ハッ

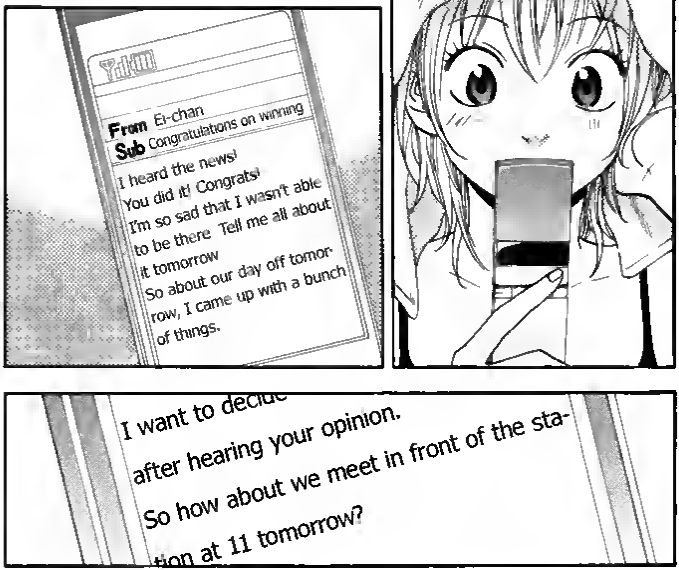
I'M HOME~
WELCOME BACK HOW WAS IT?
UMM


WITHOUT LOSING A SINGLE SET.
THE NEXT DAY...
NACCHAN ACHIEVED A STUNNING ACCOMPLISHMENT OF WINNING THE COMPETITION

IN?
AS FOR THE MEN'S FINALS...


APPARENTLY, THE SCORE WAS 4 – 6, 7 – 5, 7 – 5.
IT SEEMS LIKE IT WAS A PRETTY CLOSE MATCH
BUT... HOW WAS THE CONTENT?
HUH?
NABAE-KUN LOST...?!

BASED ON COACH MIURA,
APPARENTLY NABAE MADE LOT OF UNLIKELY MISTAKES.
BUT ARAYA WAS ALSO PLAYING EXTREMELY WELL.
UNLIKELY MISTAKES...?
I CAN'T IMAGINE NABAE-KUN BREAKING HIS CONDITION
WHAT HAPPENED?
SINCE YOU HAVE THE DAY OFF TOMORROW, LET'S LOOK AT THE VIDEO CAREFULLY THE DAY AFTER
YES.
DAY OFF ...
THAT'S RIGHT. I NEED TO FIGURE THAT ONE OUT,
YOU'VE GOT MAIL~ ♪

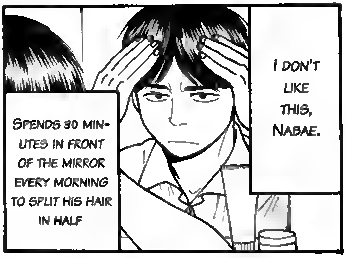

From Ei-chan
Sub Congratulations on winning
I heard the news!
You did it! Congrats!
I'm so sad that I wasn't able to be there. Tell me all about it tomorrow.
So about our day off tomorrow, I came up with a bunch of things.
I want to decide
after hearing your opinion.
So how about we meet in front of the station at 11 tomorrow?

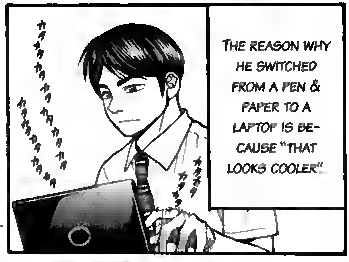
TO BE CONTINUED IN VOL 20

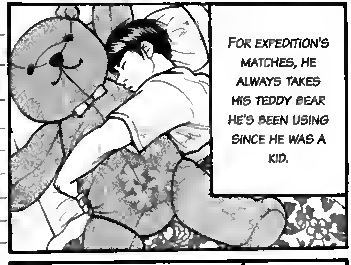
Baby Steps

This looks good
from time to time

I DON'T LIKE THIS, NABAE







Date

Morning, this is Katsuki.
Volume 19 was pretty much all Nabae match. The name "Nabae" was given by one of my staff Mr K. I really like it.
Since I prefer other people making the names of my characters I always ask people nearby for a name unless there's one I really want to use.
The reason I do this is because it helps me get an impression of "someone that exists somewhere" rather than "a character that I created myself". So I name my characters by showing a sketch of the character and asking people nearby "How would you name this one?"
If I do that when I finish creating the character I go "Huh, so that's what this person is called."

Since we are finally done with the Kanto Competition that's been going on for almost a year I would like to try a bunch of stuff on the next one. Then bye~

mangascans.org
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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

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